RACE TODAY

1977

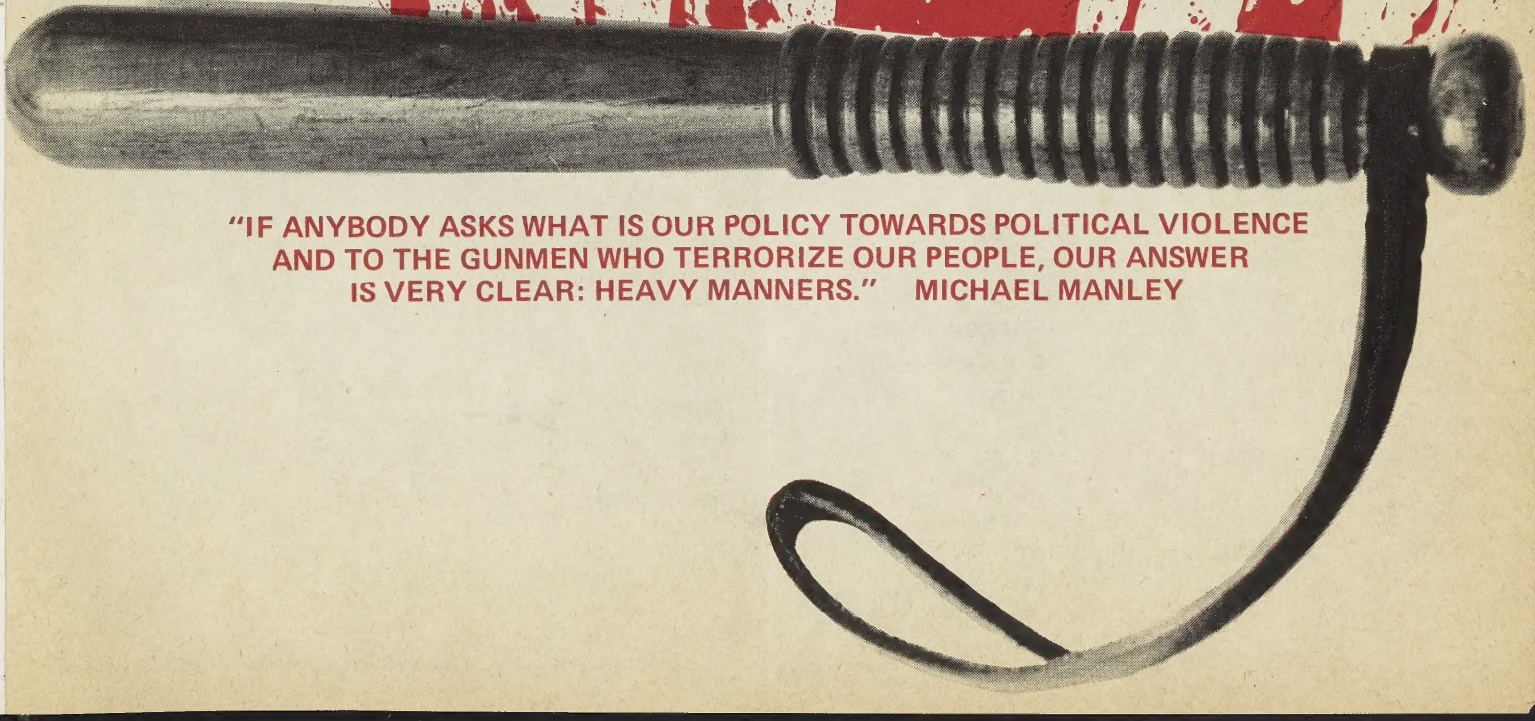
DARCUS HOWE

Race Today

VOICE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY IN BRITAIN

DECEMBER 1976/JANUARY 1977 25p

HEAVY MANNERS



"IF ANYBODY ASKS WHAT IS OUR POLICY TOWARDS POLITICAL VIOLENCE AND TO THE GUNMEN WHO TERRORIZE OUR PEOPLE, OUR ANSWER IS VERY CLEAR: HEAVY MANNERS." MICHAEL MANLEY

LETTERS

Dear Race Today,
I must admit to confusion when I read the November issue of *Race Today* – received incidentally on December 31.

In the editorial an international army of labour is mentioned, sending money home to support families in Asia, the West Indies and Africa. A responsible age group who make mature decisions.

Who then are the people who advocate that the young blacks of Chapeltown, Leeds, should have repeated the 1975 Bonfire Night fiasco? Among other things it would have provoked fear in the community, some members of which have no cultural connection with Guy Fawkes. Apparently there were some people of this opinion anyway and because of this would not participate in what could be classed as a decadent festival.

A community is composed of many groups and many more individuals. The younger generation of blacks cannot have the same feeling of responsibility towards their parents because mostly they are here. It is a different situation and has to be seen as such.

Society may be failing the young blacks of Chapeltown, Brixton and elsewhere but society is dealing with something new here. The questions are many and keep coming. The answers can be varied and surely some are being given quietly and with responsibility.

Personal growth should be the aim of all thinking people. The encouragement of young people to disturb a residential area and bring worry and despair to their parents is not evidence of mature responsibility. Unfortunately political manipulation is allowed to proceed.

Helen Bruton,
Leeds LS8 1NG.

Dear Race Today,
I have read, with great interest, the article in your October edition headed 'Black Parents and Students on the Move', and, in particular, your section on filing a complaint.

As a legal practitioner I have found that in cases where a client alleges that the police have assaulted him or her, the courts pay little attention to these allegations, and indeed, have no jurisdiction to deal with them *unless* the client has taken out cross-summonses against the particular police officers concerned.

The best mode of defence is attack and, in cases where a defendant to a charge alleges police brutality, medical reports should be obtained and he should prosecute the police officers by taking out cross-summonses against them for assault occasioning actual bodily harm or grievous bodily harm. The object of this is to ensure that when the defendant attends his court hearing he will not only be defending his own case but prosecuting it as well. The police officers will not only be playing the role of prosecutors but will be forced to defend.

I have discovered that this policy of prosecuting on cross-summonses is effective in appropriate cases and the courts are bound to hear and try the charges and cross-summonses alike.

A police complaint may also be made, but it must be remembered that if the defendant is convicted he is very unlikely to succeed with his complaint.

Colin Bobb-Semple,
Willesden, London NW10.

Dear Race Today,
I am pleased to inform you that I am very impressed with your monthly magazine *Race Today*, especially the way you report, quite effectively, the unfair treatment experienced by our people in employment, housing, education, police attitudes etc. The common base around which your magazine seems to unite our community members looks like their oppressed state.

I believe that for the real advancement of our people, or for all the people who are being oppressed, the knowledge of their true national identity is of utmost importance. The true unity of any nation can only be achieved if it is based on the national identity of its people. Mental freedom from any inferiority complex about our origin is important for our children to fight the daily prejudices which they experience at each stage of their lives ie. in schools, employment, social gatherings etc.

I would like to see some well researched papers about our national identity published in your magazine. Local West Indian organisations and families should also be encouraged to discuss this subject amongst themselves.

Finally, I would like to quote Mr Alex Haley, an American writer, who said in a recent interview the following: "Most of all, I hope my book gives black people a sense of where we came from, a sense of a proud heritage. We are a people who subtly have been made to hate ourselves, to hate our slave ancestry. Our lack of identity has made black people feel worthless. And I want to give back to black people their roots."

U. R. Bance,
Manchester.

Dear Race Today,
Some of your readers may have heard a broadcast on the Jamaican situation on the BBC radio programme, 'The World Tonight', on November 16, in which I was a speaker.

(Letters continued on page 262)

EDITORIAL

HEAVY MANNERS

Here, in Britain, there are half a million of us who are of Caribbean origin. More than half this figure comes from Jamaica. We have left our relatives and friends behind. Between 1961 and 1963 we sent some £22 million back to Jamaica. A survey in Nottingham in 1965 showed that 85% of West Indian women were sending money back home.

Though these figures are subject to fluctuations as the years go by, it is clear that we, Caribbeans, here in Britain, are closely linked with the population in those countries from which we have come. And that link is not purely sentimental but material as well.

Any political struggle which explodes in those countries from which we have originated, at once, consumes our interests.

In 1968, when the Rodney Affair brought violent demonstrations to Kingston, Jamaica, West Indians in Britain demonstrated against the brutality of the Shearer regime.

In 1970, the rebellion of Trinidadians and Tobagonians against the Williams regime provoked a sympathetic demonstration in support.

It was equally the case with the struggles waged by Grenadians against their government in 1974 and Dominicans in 1975. And so it is with the recent developments in Jamaica.

We are in no doubt that there are those here who lend their support to those governments and reactionary elements who, in the last 10 years, have faced the wrath and hostility of the masses of West Indians at home. What emerges, though, is that this political sentiment could find little support from the mass of Caribbeans in Britain. On the Jamaica question, the Freedom League, which surfaced after one of Seaga's visits to Britain, attempted to mobilise support for the high-ups. They called a public meeting at the West Indian Students Centre, and an overwhelming majority of the audience opposed their views and put them under 'heavy manners'.

Even this brief and cursory assessment of the political attitudes of West Indians in Britain would indicate that any political movement in Jamaica or elsewhere in the Caribbean could depend on our support for the most far reaching and revolutionary changes they propose for Caribbean society. It could not be otherwise.

Here we are, thousands of miles from home, in an inhospitable land. Our very presence here is a consequence of the failure of political movements in our history to break with the domination which modern capitalism has placed on our lives. Here we are continuing the very struggle, the very tradition of Caribbean militancy, which our brothers and sisters at home are in the process of taking forward. Our support and involvement is assured but we are not going to be uncritical.

In this issue of *Race Today*, we feature a discussion on what is taking place in Jamaica. We do not begin, as many have in the past weeks, with what Michael Manley is doing or will do. We recognise that what he does is, in one sense, central, even of the greatest importance. But we go further. Every radical posture, assumed by Michael Manley in the last two years, has been in response to the militant actions of the working class and peasantry. He has gained strength from them, not them from him.

Manley did not engage in the re-distribution of land in the countryside because it was part of any coherent revolutionary programme and policy. The workers and peasantry had themselves seized the land when Manley intervened. The unemployed had, since 1968, burnt Kingston down before the PNP decided to mobilise a section of them into youth groups.

The Americans and their allies among local capitalists in Jamaica, intervened militarily, not because they feared Manley's militancy, not because they feared Manley's democratic socialism. They are known to have supported like regimes elsewhere in the world. They intervened because they know that what is developing within the Jamaican working class, not even Manley can arrest. They know it because their agents have been monitoring the temper of the West Indian masses in the last 10 years. They know it because the Cuban revolution is an historic example of what Caribbeans on the move are likely to do.

Their attempts to get rid of Manley are based in the fact that to date, he has shown himself powerless to check and destroy the rising tide of militancy that the mass of Jamaicans have been displaying, long before the PNP came to power.

While, on the one hand, Manley and the PNP are powerless to check the tide of militancy, on the other hand he has no intention of equipping the working class and peasantry with the power to take on the might of Yankee imperialism.

The mass movement appears, from here in Britain, frightenely exposed as a result of Manley's policy of halfwayism. He courts imperialism on the one hand and makes radical noises on the other. He appears to be for working class demands today and sets up a gun court and the Industrial Relations Act tomorrow.

We, in Britain, have sufficient experience of democratic socialism. We won't buy it Michael nor would we encourage our kith and kin in JA to do so. Even if it involves putting you under 'heavy manners'.

Race Today Collective

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PARENTS AND YOUTH AGAINST 'SUS'

Black parents and black youth living in Ealing, West London, recently fired the first shots in bringing into being a movement against the 'sus' law. At a public meeting, organised by Concerned Black Parents and Black Youth in Ealing, on November 26, 1976, the following resolution was proposed and passed unanimously by some 40 members of the black community who were present:

> *"This gathering authorises the organisers of the meeting to initiate and carry out activities aimed at wiping the 'sus' law off the statute book."*

'Sus' is the crime of being a suspected person. It dates back to the Vagrancy Act of 1824. It is one of the most powerful weapons the police force has at its disposal. The legal ingredients of the 'sus' law states:

> *"Every person or reputed thief frequenting or loitering about in any street, highway or avenue leading thereto, or any place of public resort with intent to commit an arrestable offence, is guilty of the offence."*

In practice and effect, it is a licence for the police to pick up anyone at anytime. When a person is arrested under this law and taken to the magistrates court, there is no responsibility on the part of the police to produce independent witnesses or victims to substantiate the charge.

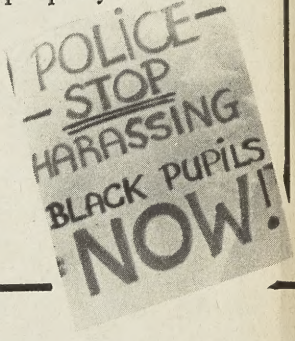
These days, 'sus' is by far the most notorious and frequently used charge against West Indian youth. The kind of evidence used to convict them is almost always the same – "I saw the accused going down bus queues dipping in hand bags, your Worship," or, "I saw the accused trying car doors, your Worship". Evidence of this kind, without any independant collaboration from witnesses or victims, has been responsible for convicting hundreds of West Indian youths throughout Britain.

Each West Indian community has its own share of horror stories to tell about the use of the 'sus' law. The meeting organised in Ealing came about as the result of an increase in 'sus' charges against the youth of the area.

In one incident, a 17 year-old youth, who was about to board a bus with friends, was grabbed by two plain clothes policemen. He was beaten in the police station and framed on a charge of stealing £2.00. At his fourth appearance at the local magistrates court on this charge, the police laid 10 further charges of theft against him. He was told when arrested, "From now on, every black boy walking in Ealing and Acton will be arrested for 'sus' and we can make it stick."

'Sus' is also used by the police to clear up their unsolved cases of theft. In another incident, which occurred three weeks earlier, a gang of policemen raided the black section of the Greensleeves record shop in Ealing. Seven youths were arrested and later charged with conspiracy to steal from persons unknown.

The resolution of parents and young people in the Ealing meeting is an historic one. The 'sus' law reflects and identifies an area of the sharpest conflict in the continued war between black youth and the police. The resolution to fight against it provides a basis on which a movement of parents and youth can organise against police power. The terrain for the battle is a fertile one, particularly since the events of the Notting Hill Carnival 1976 placed the police question on a national and international level. We are rid of having to begin with convincing people that the police are not doing their job properly.



HARLESDEN DEFENDANTS SENTENCED

On December 13, 1976, Hyacinth, Rosa and Monica returned to Willesden Magistrates Court to receive the sentences which the Bench had delayed announcing for three weeks. The long gap between verdict and sentence did not put off the numerous friends and supporters of the girls who turned up regularly to witness the trail. Once again the public gallery was packed.

Rosa and Hyacinth were the first to be dealt with. Mrs Constance MacIntyre, Chairwoman of the Bench, delivered the sentence - three months imprisonment suspended for two years. Assault on the police, she said, was a very serious matter and, in reaching their decision, they did not take into account the cost of putting the girls in prison or the fact that it was only 12 days to Christmas. Mrs MacIntyre concluded, "please don't feel that you have got away with it, because having announced our decision, this is the last time that you can expect such leniency".

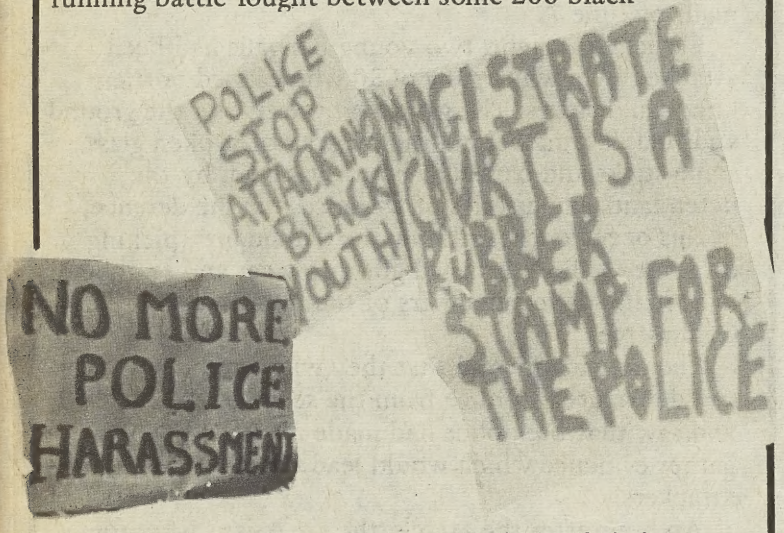
Immediately the sentences were announced there was an eruption in the public gallery. A loud booing

'THIS IS A POLICE COURT'

"There is no justice. Why are they [the police] allowed to come and tell lies and get away with it? This is a police court."

This statement was made by Mrs Bushell, a West Indian mother, outside Tottenham magistrate's court. On Friday, November 26, she was present at court for the case of her three daughters — Janice, Beverley and Angela and a young man, Garnet Maxwell. They were charged with threatening behaviour, obstruction and assault on police. All pleaded not guilty to the charges.

The defence of the three Bushell sisters, in reply to the charges, was as follows: On May 24, 1976, in the early evening, their mother sent them to Wood Green police station to make enquiries about their cousin who had been arrested earlier that day. He was held at the station on charges connected with a running battle fought between some 200 black students, returning from a school sports event, and police forces which had amassed and attacked them.



The sisters were refused entry into the police station. They saw a police van entering the court yard, and followed it because they believed their cousin might be inside. A policeman told them he would give them a count of 10 to remove themselves or they would be arrested. "One, two, three." The girls stood their ground. He went no further. They were seized and arrested.

The magistrate was simply concerned with getting rid of the matter as quickly as possible. He constantly cut short questions put by defence counsel to police witnesses. At one point he accused the barrister of wasting the court's time. He told her that he noted that she asked the same question eight times and that, if she carried on in this way, "we will be here another day".

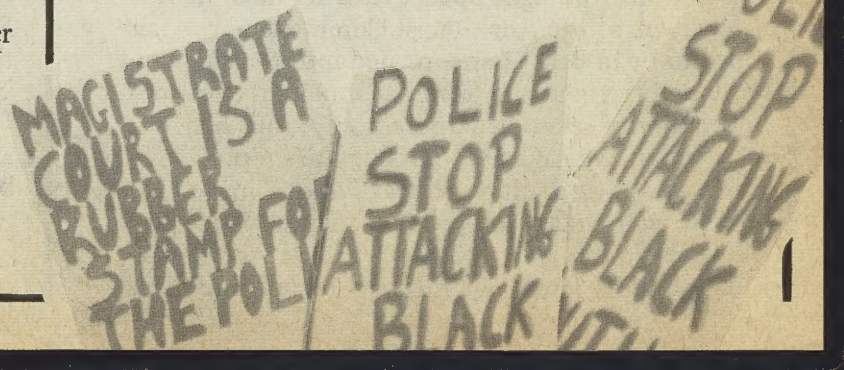
Garnet Maxwell had witnessed the manhandling and arrest of the three sisters. He was on his way to evening classes. Immediately, he went into Wood Green Police Station and told the sergeant on duty that he wished to complain about the behaviour of the police officers. He was told to wait. He waited and got no response. He then left to join a group of some 20 black people who gathered outside, including now, Mrs Bushell. P.C. Bell came out and told the group to move on. Maxwell attempted to re-enter the police station to pursue his complaint. He was prevented from doing so by P.C. Bell. P.C. Bell arrested Maxwell and charged him on two counts of obstruction.

In court, defence counsel tried to establish with P.C. Bell that Maxwell had attempted to register a complaint at Wood Green police station. The magistrate again interrupted and said: "You keep putting questions that have nothing to do with this case. I have been here since 11.45. You must not delay proceedings."

The final outcome of this charade was that the magistrate was forced through lack of police evidence, to acquit Beverley and Angela on the obstruction charge. Janice was found guilty of threatening behaviour and assault. She was fined £30. Garnet Maxwell was also found guilty on both charges of obstruction and fined £50.

and hissing was set up, some youths banged their feet on the wooden floors while others got up and stomped angrily and noisily out of the court. A youth yelled, 'you old cow'. Both Hyacinth and Rosa have issued notices of appeal.

Monica had to wait yet another week to hear what Mrs MacIntyre had in store for her, because the Social Reports, demanded by the bench, were not yet ready. The bench needed Social Reports on Monica because, as Mrs MacIntyre stated, she wanted to know why Monica as the mother of two children, had been out at 2.30 am at the Burning Spear Club. A week later Monica was sentenced to a two-year probation order with the following conditions: if the Probation Officer says he wants to see her then that takes priority over everything else; Monica must not move her address without permission; if she works, she must not change her occupation without informing the Probation Officer; and, above all, she must lead an industrious and honest life.



ASIANS AND THE POLICE

Towards the end of August last year, the last month of the long hot Asian summer of '76, the Anti-Racist Committee for the Defence of Asians in East London (ARC—AEL) called a meeting in Spitalfields, the heart of the Bengali community, to protest against police activity in the area. It was the first anti-police meeting to be called by Asians of the East End.

An hour before the meeting, uniformed police arrived in vanloads and parked in a side street adjourning the building. Officers were stationed on the terraces of adjacent housing estates. Squad cars patrolled the area.

A week earlier, the police had been told by the committee that they would not be allowed into the meeting. Chief Inspector Johnston, the local community liaison officer, had approached one of the elders of the Bangladesh Welfare Association and said he was deeply 'concerned' about the allegations against the police which had been made in the leaflet calling people to the meeting.

The leaflet referred to set out four cases of police brutality against the Asian community. They all concerned the Bethnal Green police station.

The Anti-Racist Committee had invited *Race Today*, representatives of the Black Parents and Black Students Movements to address the meeting. That gathering made it clear that the Asian population, faced with the same conflicts with the police that the Caribbean population has organised against, is preparing itself for a long battle.

From the floor, speaker after speaker said that in clashes with whites, the police inevitably took the side of the racist attackers. Another fact also emerged. Half the cases quoted against the police were to do with the Asian community's struggle for housing. In this housing battle between the Asian population and the state, the police had made a serious intervention.

Since that meeting, the dossier of allegations against the police, especially the Bethnal Green police station has grown. Below we set out a cross section of cases:

Case 1: On July 30, Mustaffa Siddiqui, an Asian student, was helping out in a tobacconists shop in Brick Lane. He was alone in the shop, behind the counter. Over a squabble involving a few sweets a group of white people — a man, a woman and three juveniles— rushed into the shop and stuck a knife in his shoulder, ripping it open with a six-inch blade.

Members of the Anti-Racist Committee, who happened to be in Brick Lane, rushed into the shop and prevented the incident from becoming more serious. In a matter of seconds, hundreds of Asians had gathered on the pavement outside the shop. The police arrived and put Mustaffa Siddiqui into a car with the white man. They publicly asked Siddiqui who stabbed him and were told. People who had witnessed the events gave their names and addresses and said they were prepared to give evidence. The attacking weapon is in the possession of the police.

That night, Bethnal Green police visited Mustaffa Siddiqui in hospital, spoke to the Siddiqui family and said that the case should be dropped and the attackers not prosecuted 'in the interests of racial harmony'. The Siddiqui family refused and phoned Bethnal Green several times in the following weeks to find out if the case was being pursued.

To date, no charges have been brought by Bethnal Green police station, none of the potential witnesses have been contacted or interviewed.

Case 2: On two days in November, at Old Street Magistrates Court, six young Asian workers were found by the presiding bench of magistrates to be guilty of carrying offensive weapons. Each of them was fined £50 and asked to pay £5 costs. The case against them was brought after their arrests on the night of June 7.

Earlier that night, two young Bengalis had been attacked by a white gang of 30 who carried bottles, knives and staves. The gang beat the two to the ground and fled, leaving behind them a trail of broken glass, some sticks and bars. The court was told, by the defendants and a series of witnesses for the defence, of this occurrence, and how the defendants, picking up some of the debris had got into a car and searched in Spitalfields for members of the Anti-Racist Committee.

The defendants said that they witnessed the arrival and departure of police from the scene of the attack and saw that the police had made no attempt to gather evidence which would lead them to the attackers.

An hour after the attack, the six Asians were followed in their car to Spellman House where two of them live, and arrested. In court, the police alleged that the six had admitted to being a sort of vigilante group. The defence evidence was ignored. The magistrates supported the testimony of the two arresting officers.

Case 3: On January 19, the trial of 19 defendants, two of them Asians, all of them arrested after the National Front attacked a demonstration on November 7, in Spitalfields, will be in the courts. The demonstration was called by ARC—AEL. It's route was agreed on by Superintendent Burgess of Bethnal Green police station who seemed satisfied, the night before, with the arrangements for stewarding made by the organisers.

The fight between the National Front activists and the demonstration occurred after the NF members broke through a cordon of police, following the eggs, stones and abuse they had hurled.

After the demonstration, several members of the organising committee went to Bethnal Green police

to secure the release of the arrested demonstrators.

The police had put a cordon around the station and told the people who turned up to enquire, to clear off. Frank Perry, notorious local NF organiser, arrived at the station and was received like the prodigal son. He was invited into the station. He disappeared with his gang behind the police cordon.

Other NF members gathered in groups on the pavement outside and after an altercation with some of the Anti-Racist demonstrators, attacked one Mr Lynch who was waiting for the release of an arrestee. The police intervened and arrested Lynch. At the preliminary hearing, they charged him with threatening behaviour and asked the court to separate his court hearing from that of the demonstrators. They said that the circumstances of his arrest were 'unconnected' with the events of the day.

Cases 4 & 5: On July 7, Mr Maklis Ali was prevented from taking up residence in a flat allocated to his family by the Greater London Council, on the Mountmoress Estate, Commercial Road. The whites on the estate ganged up to prevent him entering. Mr Ali was told by the police that there was nothing they could do about the mob, and they referred him back to the GLC to ask for a transfer elsewhere.

In the case of Mr Matasin Ali, the members of the Bengali Housing Action Group evacuated him from his GLC flat in Hollybush Gardens after a gang had smashed up his flat and terrorised his family for six hours. The Bethnal Green police were told during the incident, but said they were dealing with burglaries and could not turn up.

Case 6: On August 15, Bethnal Green police, led by Inspector Eatherton, broke down the door of a first floor flat in Arthur Deakin House, Woodseer Street, E1 and physically evicted Mr Sunahar Ali, Mr Fazlu Miah and their families who had squatted the flat 24 hours earlier.

The police had been called by the GLC caretaker of Arthur Deakin House and by a white tenant on the ground floor who did not want Bengali squatters moving into the building. The two people who complained came into the flat with the police who proceeded to put the belongings and furniture of the family onto the balcony and board up the empty flat.

The two families then turned to the Bengali Housing Action Group for temporary accommodation. When members of BHAG went down to Bethnal Green police station to question this illegal action of the police, Inspector Eatherton said that he had not acted in any way illegally and that the Ali and Miah families ought to be grateful that he hadn't charged them with threatening behaviour.

Case 7: On Thursday, December 16, one of the members of the Bengali Housing Action Group appeared at Snaresbrook Crown Court charged by Arbour Street police with the theft of gas from the North Thames Gas Board.

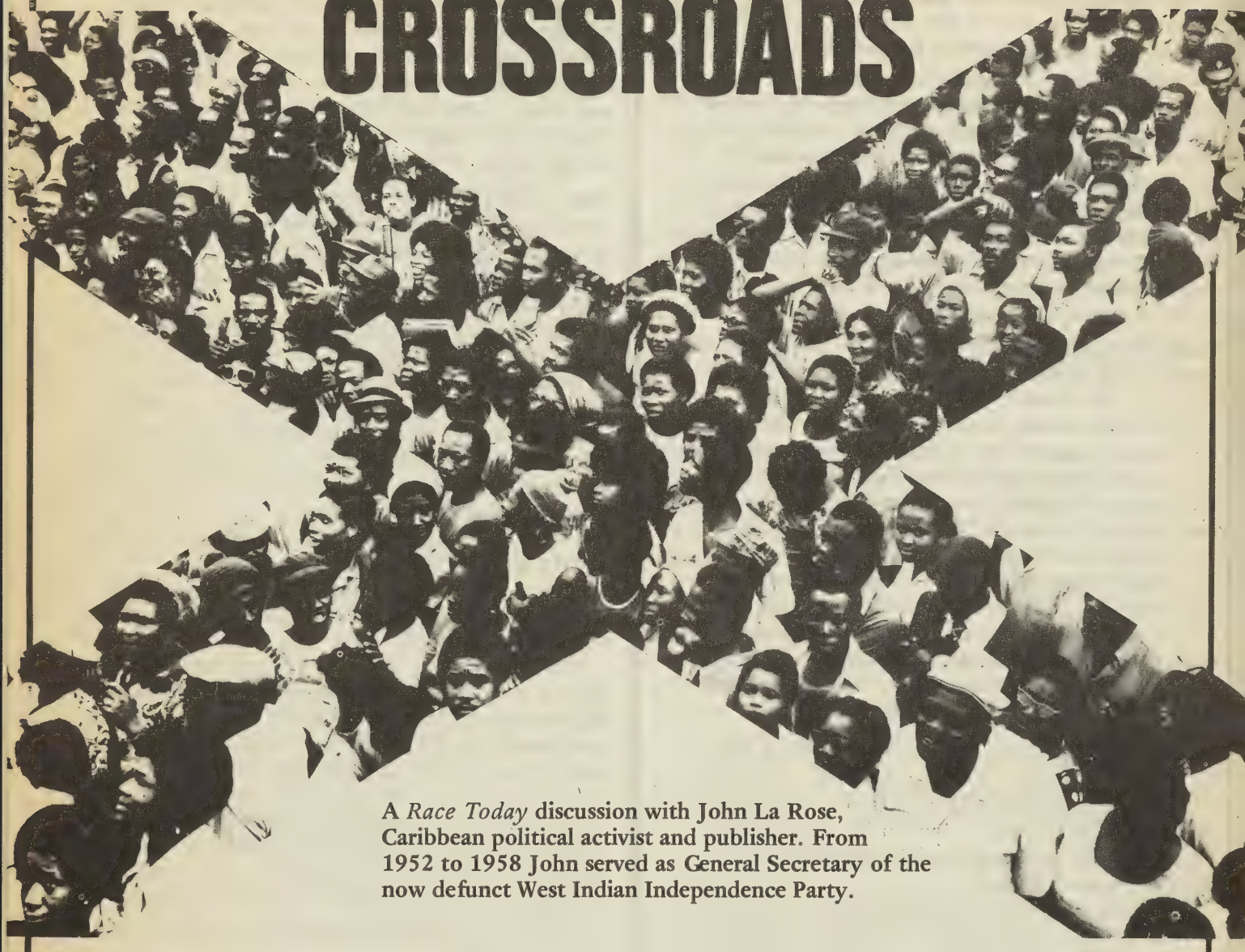
The arrest on this charge took place in September 1975, when the BHAG member was in the process of reconnecting a gas pipe leading to the house of Mrs Riaz, a widow who had squatted in a mobile in Essian Street. At the time, the Gas Board was pursuing a policy of disconnecting the supplies of Asian squatters (white homeless families and individuals were receiving gas at the time).
Mrs Riaz had a meter and paid not only her own bill, but the bill that had arrived in the name of the occupiers who preceded her. The Gas Board arbitrarily cut the supply. After several approaches they would not reconnect.

The case was one in which a charge was brought against an organising member of the Asian political organisation dealing with housing. The Judge in the case asked why it had taken 15 months to bring the case to court. In his summing up, the judge seemed convinced that the defendant was acting in his capacity as a member of an organisation seeking a solution to the housing problems of Asians rather than as a thief. He instructed the jury to consider whether any intention to steal gas was involved. The jury, after 10 minutes deliberation, found the defendant not guilty.



Tony Bock

JAMAICA AT THE CROSSROADS



A *Race Today* discussion with John La Rose, Caribbean political activist and publisher. From 1952 to 1958 John served as General Secretary of the now defunct West Indian Independence Party.

In the last weeks we have witnessed a string of dramatic political events in Jamaica. Much of what is taking place there at present is being recorded in British newspapers, television and radio, on a scale not experienced in the political life of any other Caribbean country. It is important that West Indians in Britain be clear about what is taking place in Jamaican society today.

Quite recently, the press here has been writing about destabilisation in Jamaica, Barbados and Guyana. The question I have to ask myself about all this is why, at this present moment, this question arouses such intense interest and such an intense reaction in the United States, Britain and other countries around the world?

When I was in Barbados recently, I noticed, in looking at the statistics issued by the Ministry of Finance, that tourism has replaced sugar as the important source of economic development. If you look at Jamaica, you will see that bauxite and tourism have gone ahead of sugar as well and, on the whole, the sugar industry in the Caribbean is in a state of collapse. So what I believe is happening is that the plantation system, which we have known as the basis of our economies for the longest while, where thousands of people are employed on sugar plantations, that system is in a state of collapse. Because, at this present moment, the production of sugar in the Caribbean is incapable of competing in the world market. Our rate of productivity is much too low.

For example, in Jamaica, Manley has been able to make play of his radical position, simply by giving land to those peasants who have been working for very little on those sugar plantations for the longest period of their lives. Greg Chamberlain, *The Guardian* correspondent, in reporting on the elections in Jamaica, said that, for the first time, the Peoples National Party (PNP) has been able to exceed the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP), in the rural vote. The PNP could only have made those gains by the redistribution of land which the companies no longer want. Other governments in the Caribbean are also making a great play about all this. They say they are putting an end to capitalism and slavery, the historical roots of our subjugation. Williams, in Trinidad, when he partly nationalised the sugar industry, propagandised about ending this kind of psychological

subjugation which the sugar industry imposes on the population. He bought 51 per cent into the industry, but I asked a man who was a financial adviser to Bookers, whether he had lost by the nationalisation of sugar which the Trinidad government had carried out. He said no, he had profited by it. Otherwise, he would have faced losses because of the precarious position of West Indian sugar in the world market. That was before the special boom in sugar which has collapsed once again.

Why should Caribbean governments be buying up those estates? And why should the plantation owners be so ready to sell? Because they can no longer make those estates into profitable sources of wealth for themselves, because of the low productivity of sugar in terms of the world market, Australia began to produce sugar comparatively recently, and has the most modern machinery for the production of sugar, and has a much higher rate of productivity than even Cuba, and much higher than the West Indies. The only way that we are able to continue to sell sguar is through the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement in a protected market. In other words, the British tax payer is supporting Tate and Lyle, not the West Indian sugar worker.

We know the conditions of work and of pay under which sugar workers have been living in the West Indies, brutal conditions of work and brutal conditions of pay. That has been true not only about Jamaica, it is also true of other Caribbean territories. The industry generates the most backward social relations in our economy. That is the problem. As far as the plantation section of the Jamaican economy is concerned, I think that what we are seeing is the social convulsion born out of the end of that sector of the economy and its replacement by modern capitalist relations which are in the process of penetrating the entire economy.

It is in that situation that Manley presents himself, and offers a cooperative system to the workers who are already taking over that land and who are trying to break up the old relations of the plantation. In doing that he is opening a Pandora's box because it affects all the relations of the entire society.

Both the Jamaica Labour Party and the Peoples National Party were born in the mass rebellion of workers and peasants against the plantation system and the colonial regime which administered that system. Both parties have held the reins of political power since 1944, when Jamaicans over the age of 21 were free to vote for a government of their choice. Today, 23 years later, sections of workers and peasants are still faced with the task of breaking out of a plantation economy which has been strangling their development since the days of slavery.

Unlike say Trinidad and Tobago, where you have had an organised working class independent of the political organisations, and, as a result of that independence, it acted at times as the political opposition to the regime the historical formation of the parties in Jamaica and elsewhere in the Caribbean has been different.

In Jamaica, there emerged the Bustamante Industrial Trades Union and the Bustamante Party, the JLP. Opposed to them were the PNP and the Trades Union Congress with Dick Hart, Ken Hill and others who were in the leadership of the TUC.

Bustamante led the sugar estate workers in the major strike of 1938, which eventually developed into a political uprising. He maintained his following because, in one sense, he could and did threaten the black working class with what is known as 'brown man rule' — the rule of the brown and light skinned middle classes. In short, the rule of the PNP. It was the brown and light skinned middle classes which gave birth to the PNP and provided that organisation with its leadership. Whereas, in the case of the JLP or the Bustamante Party as it was also called, and the Bustamante Industrial Trade Union, it was the revolt of the workers and poor peasants against the plan-



Reprinted from the Jamaican Weekly Gleaner

tation system, against the sugar estates, which created these organisations that attacked colonialism. But in uniting as it did with Bustamante you can see what happened to that movement. The trade union leader himself becomes a landowner. He is bureaucratised within the structure that he is supposed to be struggling against and he is used against the very popular support that remains with him for quite a long historical period. That support could see nothing else to turn to; because to turn to brown man rule, to turn to the brown middle classes which the PNP represented, is to turn to its natural enemy that it knows from working in their kitchens, in their gardens. It knows it in the schools, it knows it in the shops and in the government offices. It knows that brown man and his arrogance and contempt for the black unemployed and poor working classes. It knows all that and therefore to move from the man who gave them whatever increase in wages they got from the general strikes of the 1930's to that brown man rule is the most difficult kind of transition to ask of them. We must also add that the PNP was not exclusively made up of the middle classes. They had a following in the working class in the form of the TUC.

In other words, there has always been a twin movement, the political party and its labour arm. In that situation you did not have a trade union like the Oilfield Workers Trade Union in Trinidad, where there were branches and dues were paid etc. A trade union was simply a following and you negotiated for that following. There was no modern structure. You had the charismatic leader, the boss leader, the boss trade union man. It means therefore that the organisational independence of the working class vis a vis that kind of trade unionism and that kind of politics becomes the essential condition which the working class has to fulfil before it can itself establish a strong position in Jamaican society. That has been the grave responsibility of the working class in Jamaica, to establish its independence instead of being a part of the politics of either the JLP or the PNP. Every attempt at doing that in the past has been confronted with an enormous amount of opposition from the established political groupings — PNP or JLP.

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS MOVEMENT

In 1951 we saw, perhaps, the first serious attack against the independently organised working class. Dick Hart, the author of Jamaica: A Challenge from the Right (Race Today, April 1976) and the Hill brothers (Ken and Frank Hill) who were in the leadership of the Trades Union Congress, were expelled from the PNP for their Marxist and radical political stances. They took the TUC with them. In the following year the PNP took the decision to form the National Workers Union.

After that split in the PNP, when the so-called Marxists were expelled, you had a decline for a certain period in what can be described as independent working class action within the political movement. Hart, Hill and others represented a section of the working class inside the Nationalist movement. The moment when the TUC representatives on the Executive Committee of the PNP became dominant in the party elections, Norman Manley, Michael Manley's father, split off that section from the PNP. Hart and Hill, Ken Hill in particular, in organising a section of the working class, failed to meet the challenge and the threat which this particular split from the right had posed for the working class. They went into decline.

It was not until 1958 that a strong and powerful movement took shape within the working class. A militant group, around a young worker named John Vickers, emerged in the National Workers Union among the bauxite workers. The Vickers group challenged the established union team and swept the board in the union elections. The group raised the issue of racism in the industry, as practised by the North American management, and soon they were able to establish themselves in the leadership of the bauxite workers. The group called a strike at the Kirkvine plant and Michael Manley and his cohorts did everything in their power to break the strike and undermine the militancy of the workers.

Vickers, the labour leader, presented the most significant threat to the PNP/National Workers Union, JLP/Bustamante Industrial Workers Union, in terms of how these organisations had sewed up the working class both politically and in terms of their social organisations. He organised the bauxite workers and he obviously showed a certain kind of independence in relation to the Manleys — Norman Manley who was at the time the Prime Minister and leader of the party and Michael Manley who was the leader of the trade union arm of the party. And bauxite was becoming the dominant industry within the economy.

Vickers related here in London the efforts made to simply get rid of him. He was very dramatic in relating those incidents and the mass movements which the bauxite workers were presenting against the interests of the state and the bauxite companies. But in order to prevent this independent action which this particular group around Vickers organised within the society, they so terrorised Vickers, to the extent of driving him out of the country to England in search of safety.

Another thrust came from within the unemployed section of the working class, through the Unemployed Workers Council which Ben Munroe led in Kingston. That was in the early 1960's. At the same time, there developed in a small section of the PNP — a youth group — the Young Socialists of which Hugh Small,

the present Minister of Youth and Sport, was a leader. Bobby Hill was also one of the leaders in that section. Hugh Small was not only a leader of the Young Socialists, he also had some connection with the organised section of the working class, in that he was invited by Michael Manley to return to Jamaica from Britain to form part of the leadership of the National Workers Union. Michael Manley had by then become the leader of the National Workers Union and invited Hugh Small into his organisation. The activists (Young Socialists, Unemployed Workers Council etc.) attempted, together, to work out tactics and policy in connection with some kind of independent action from the left within Jamaican society, which more or less could represent the interests of the poor sections of the working class and the unemployed.

They were defeated. Hugh Small had to leave the National Workers Union because Manley was constantly getting at him. Like the way he attacked Vickers. Not in the sense of trying to get rid of him as they did in the case of Vickers, but in the sense of the kind of pressure they put on him. So he had to leave the union and he also abandoned the Young Socialists. He went into private practice as a barrister.

Then, later, in 1968, we witnessed what we now refer to as the Rodney Affair. Walter Rodney, a lecturer at the University in Mona, Jamaica, began a series of rap sessions on African History with the Rastafarians. He subsequently left the country to attend a conference in Canada. While there, he was declared a subversive and banned from returning to Jamaica. Information of the government's ban was met with an open rebellion of the students and unemployed youth in Kingston. The government replied with bullets and tear gas. It was, perhaps, the first time since 1938 that the independent working class movement had expressed itself with such violence. The PNP was then in opposition, and nowhere can we find any serious protests from them in relation to the ruling JLP's reaction to these events.

Yes, when the Rodney thing came along it happened in a very peculiar way. It was, to some extent, the period of the rise of Rastafarianism in the culture of the country, the cult of the unemployed rude bwoy and the continuing development of a new music, from Blue Beat to Ska, then to Reggae. It's important to say that it is the music not so much of Jamaica as of West Kingston, Jamaica; that it is the music of the unemployed sections and the expression of their cultural and social creativity. The extent of the violence of their lives comes out in the violence of their music, as well as the monotony of the unemployed existence – that drum beat in the Reggae music represents the monotony of their lives. But what the music does show is that there is a certain rebelliousness within the body of the unemployed and it expresses itself in articulating a position as to what it wants to see happening in that society.

Rodney returned to Jamaica as a lecturer in charge of African History in the Department of History at the University of the West Indies. He began lecturing to groups throughout the country, underlining the connection between their past and their present; between ancient Africa and the kind of African connection that the Rastas have tried to maintain in terms of their identity, in terms of their consciousness, in terms of recognising their potential as human beings in the society. Because everything



else, including brown man rule, including the rule of the white plantation society, had tried to degrade this Africanism in the population. Rodney made that connection for the Rastafarians and, in doing so, he made links with the Rastafarians in different parts of the country. When he made that connection, a new fervour was attached to this continued desire for that section of the population to break out of the JLP/PNP/Manley/Bustamante domination of the social, political and cultural life of the community. As happened previously with Hart, with the Unemployed Workers Council, Vickers, Small, so again with Rodney. He simply had to leave the country to go to the Black Writers' Congress in Canada, and the whole apparatus of the state was let loose against him. He was declared a subversive and banned by the Shearer Government from returning to Jamaica. The unemployed responded in Kingston with a major uprising. Demonstrations by the students, demonstrations by the Rastafarians and the workers, disturbance, loss of life, loss of property worth thousands of pounds were the results.

The rebellion generated by the ban on Rodney spawned radical political groups throughout the Caribbean. In Jamaica, the Abeng group was formed. It aimed at furthering the independent radical tradition in Jamaican politics

It is in this general atmosphere, and at this period in time, that the Abeng group was formed, so too the Independent Trade Union Action Committee. The Rodney Affair was the impetus for a whole new movement in Jamaica and other parts of the Caribbean. The Abeng group was made up of university intellectuals and unemployed youth and students. The university had brought into existence a new social type.

Prior to the formation of the university in 1948, what you had was really a professional businessman kind of middle class. That's the kind of social type we have had until the university. With the university you have, for the first time in our society, the salaried intellectual, the person who is also a petty bourgeoisie in terms of his social and educational achievements, but he is not wedded to the same kind of social structure as the professional had been before. Therefore, his position has been and is slightly more precarious and equally, slightly more radical. Out of this radical group came the New World Movement and Rodney was partly involved. Munroe, the present General Secretary of the Workers Liberation League was part of it. Best, the leader of Tapia in Trinidad, was part of that. So when Rodney was attacked, you had a reaction from within that section which the university had created in the Caribbean. In Trinidad the *Moko* group emerged. In Guyana it was Ratoon, and in Jamaica it was Abeng.

Now, Abeng had a very important function. They produced a newspaper and it moved into the rural areas beyond Kingston. The paper did two things. It carried the news into the rural areas, making links with people who were distributing the paper in the rural areas, and at the same time, it reported back to the centre, what the people in the rural areas were saying and doing. The group tried to instigate organisation around the issues which they were posing in the paper. In the particular issue of the Abeng newspaper, which was published around the time of the death of Dennis Slowly, the treasurer of the organisation, you were able to see exactly what Abeng had been doing — the kind of interaction between the group and the rural population. Of course, it became a threat to the ruling powers and it had to be suppressed. That has been the main thrust of the struggle in Jamaica up to now. It has been since Hart and the Hills were expelled from the PNP in 1951. The Abeng printery was burned down. Abeng was starved of funds and the paper more or less went into decline.

But something else emerged to continue that thrust. You have Reggae, which was becoming more dominant, more important in the social and cultural life. The people responded to it in a very serious way, in the alternative culture and the alternative politics of the society. Equally, a new movement grew from within the university, The University and Allied Workers Union which Munroe led. He had been part of Abeng. The Abeng Movement went in two directions. One section retained its thrust of independent action with Munroe and others. The other section entered the PNP, like Hart and others had done in the 1930's 40's and 50's. That's the present left-wing of the PNP — Bertram and Duncan who are the principal people, at the moment, that one can recognise in the leadership of the PNP.

THE MICHAEL MANLEY ERA

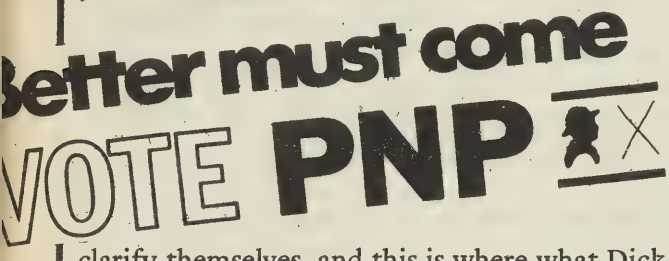
The next major event in Jamaican politics is the defeat of the JLP regime after 12 years in office. Michael Manley, the new leader of the PNP, sweeps the polls with the slogan 'Better Must Come'. That was in 1972 and he obviously transforms the mass of disaffected Jamaicans into solid support for his radical image.

Those, who have been observing Jamaican society and who have been participating in the struggles of the society, that I have spoken to and have discussed this with in the past, have all remarked on the fact that if Manley and the PNP had not come to power, it was fairly certain that there would have been a social explosion in the country.

The country had taken enough of Shearer's rule and the corruption of the JLP. It had got to a point where it had become totally unacceptable and governmental authority could no longer prevail in the society. It meant that there was the possibility of serious independent activity around the organisations and movements I have been describing, which would

certainly have challenged, not simply the authority of the government and the social organisation of the state, and therefore the interests which the state protects, like the bauxite and sugar interests, but equally, would attack the interests of the parties which had been protecting the political, social and economic system in Jamaica.

So that *The Times* newspaper, here in Britain, published an editorial about the leadership of Manley when the elections took place. They indicated, that if Manley had not been elected, the country was in for a social explosion. More or less everybody agrees with that. Manley came to power with the mass of the population behind him. But it only takes two years in any situation like ours for the issues to



clarify themselves, and this is where what Dick Hart said at that Phil Agee meeting in London at the London School of Economics on Friday, November 12, 1976, was important.

As you know, Phil Agee the ex-CIA agent, went to Jamaica at the invitation of the Jamaica Council for Human Rights and he made a report back here to a group of Concerned Americans in London. They, in turn, thought they should make his statement public, and invited him to make a public statement about what he had seen and said in Jamaica, concerning the Jamaican election and the Jamaican government. Dick Hart and Stuart Hall spoke at that meeting. I went along because the Concerned Americans had contacted us at New Beacon Books, and we gave them certain suggestions about the organisation of the meeting. When I got there, there was something which Dick Hart said that was very significant. He said that Manley personally had told him that he had timed his visit to Cuba to coincide with the by-election in Jamaica. I realised that by that time, the government and the party would be experiencing economic difficulties. Equally they would not be able to say, 'Better Must Come', if better was not coming. The population would therefore be restless about the promises that the government had made and failed to fulfil. Manley recognised, that in linking his image to the Cuban radical image in Jamaica, the electoral pay-off would be immense. He did that, and it was immense because the PNP won the by-elections and increased their vote.

I am about to read extracts from a radical US journal, Counter Spy. As the name implies, this journal aims to expose the subversive activities carried out by the United States Intelligence Service.

In an article on Jamaica, written by one Ellen Ray, we are told that, "Kissinger flew in [Jamaica] preceded by an advance party of 75 aides During Kissinger's 'vacation', he attended a meeting with Manley and a number of other high level Jamaican officials and US Embassy personnel. Though no information about the meeting was publicly released, it was reported, by several who attended, that Kissinger had come specifically to put US-Jamaican relations on the line. The Secretary of State was said to have promoted U.S.A.I.D. and economic relief if the policies of socialism were abandoned and relations with the MPLA and Cuba broken off."

This article has been widely circulated, and we have had, so far, no record from any of the parties involved that the information is inaccurate.

Manley continued with his rhetoric on Democratic Socialism and his government continued to maintain close relations with the MPLA and the Cuban government.

It does seem to me that Manley did not get permission for that policy from the State Department – the US government. Manley decided to persist in this policy and, according to Agee, the CIA was brought in to show Manley that he did not have the independence to act outside the range of US policy. Because all governments, until then in Jamaica, had been more or less puppets of the US. When independence was declared, Bustamante even made a public offer of a base to the USA, who had not even asked for those facilities.

Manley persisted in his policy, which of course he needs to do if he is going to be able to retain power in Jamaica. But the US cannot allow this relationship with Cuba to go on because it knows that its own policy in the region will be affected by it. So there's a serious contradiction between Manley's policy and US policy in Jamaica.

One of the things we have to recognise is that a neo-colony is not simply an economically profitable neo-colony. It can also be a strategic colony. That balance changes, and shifts can occur from time to time. At this present moment, I believe the main question posed in respect of Jamaica is its importance as a military strategic colony. The link with Cuba, for the electoral purposes of the Manley government, affects the military strategic interests of the US in the circumstances, there is a CIA operation that either brings you to heel on the one hand, so that you pursue the policy that the US wants, or it destabilises you and replaces you with a Pinochet type government.

At the present moment, now that the PNP has won an enormous electoral majority in Jamaica, we are faced with this possibility. Either Manley destroys the neo-colonial state and takes the revolutionary path of social transformation or he makes an accommodation with the US, sotto voce, slowly, with the imperialist interests, while pretending to be a radical third world leader. In the latter case, he will have to confront the workers, the poor peasants and the unemployed and discipline them. Any continuing wishy washy talk about Democratic Socialism will, like in the case of Allende, be a recipe for disaster.

The last time, in the Caribbean, this confrontation between the US and this radical and revolutionary tendency in Caribbean politics developed, was in the Dominican Republic in 1965. Then, President Johnson sent in the marines, shot first and asked questions afterwards. They destabilised and destroyed the Caamano regime in the Dominican Republic. That is the present situation.

WHAT IS SOCIALISM?

In the election campaign almost all the independent left wing organisations threw their organisational efforts behind the PNP, and they have all made it quite clear that Manley's brand of socialism cannot, in the circumstances, deliver the goods to the working class and the peasantry. In the next few months, therefore, we are likely to witness an intense struggle within Jamaican society and indeed in the Caribbean over the many and varied interpretations of what socialism is.

There was many illusions which some sections of that independent thrust have about Manley's radicalism. That he is hardly revolutionary will soon become clear in terms of what the workers, the unemployed and the poor peasants are asking for, now that the election has given him overwhelming power to do what he pretends he wants to do with that economy.

As it becomes clear to sections of that independent thrust that he is not prepared to use his power to break with the neo-colonial economy, we are likely to see a reaction against. When that reaction comes from within the Jamaican working class, he already has the instruments to deal with it. He already has the Gun Court, he has the Industrial Relations Act which caused enormous concern on the part of some Jamaicans in this country.

The other aspect is that we have now had elections in various parts of the Caribbean — Trinidad, Grenada, St. Lucia, Antigua, Barbados, St. Vincent and now Jamaica. Some of these elections show a trend within the working class towards a socialist thrust. The regime in power in Jamaica says it is for socialism. In all the talk of socialism in the West Indies, the general position is that the kind of socialist transformation they are aiming at is modelled on Cuban socialism, which is regarded as the supreme example of what socialism means in Caribbean society. Here in Europe, on the left generally, soviet communism and soviet Marxism is equated with state capitalism or with certain forms of state capitalism.

It is quite clear that a struggle to change any Third World society is a struggle against the United States, particularly in the Caribbean. So when you pose the question of socialism, you pose the kind of struggle that has the support of the Chinese, the Cubans and the Soviet Union in dealing with the US. It is quite clear that the Cubans could not possibly maintain their economy without the support of the Soviet Union. They are dependent on the Soviet Union to sell their sugar at special prices, when the world prices have collapsed. They depend on the Soviet Union for the most important commodity in the world, which is oil, at special rates and special terms. In these circumstances, one of the most serious ideological questions posed for these movements which seek to change our societies will be, what does this kind of socialism mean, what does it stand for and whether or not this form of state capitalism is in fact socialism. We will have to ask ourselves whether these struggles have led to socialism, when, in fact, at the end of the day, it is a party elite, a state elite, an economic and cultural elite which is put in the saddle. Though the working class and poor peasants get or might get a better welfare statism, it is unlikely they will get the power to control their lives. And welfare statism of one kind or another is now an integral mechanism of the modern capitalist state.

In the case of Guyana, the Working Peoples Alliance has raised the issue in relation to the Burnham regime and what that regime is doing internally with the support of the Cuban government. The New Beginning Movement in Trinidad and Tobago has also posed the issue of state capitalism masquerading as socialism. Except for the WPA and NBM, no one in the Caribbean has made any attempt to define the ideology of this socialist thrust, except in terms of Cuban socialism or the socialism of Eastern Europe or China.

So the first glimmer of opposition to state capitalism being presented as socialism has appeared in Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. It poses a serious ideological debate for an independent thrust of the working class and its possibilities for the future. This debate should not be confused with what our needs are. Obviously, in a country like Jamaica, the support of the Cubans, the Soviet Union and the Chinese, in terms of military armed struggle against the US in the region, will be very crucial, very important, and this fact tends to blur the whole ideological question which is being posed at the present moment.

For the organised thrust it is posed ideologically but for sections of the working class it is posed in quite a different way. For example, in Trinidad and Tobago, the United Labour Front, or a section of it, is representative of the socialist tendency in the politics of the country. They campaigned for elections in September 1976 and won 10 parliamentary seats. During the election campaign the issue of socialism was a source of constant discussion and debate among sections of the working class. Very often you were likely to hear comments from workers which I will summarise as follows:

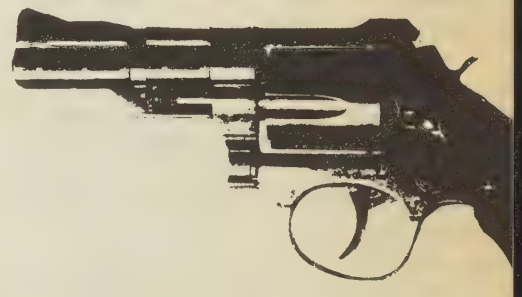
> *"Under Williams' neo-colonial regime, I, the worker, have managed to win, through my struggles, a shorter working day. Even though I may officially turn up for eight hours, my employer can only get a three or four hour working day out of me. Does this socialism mean that what I have won will be taken away, and this shorter working day will be lengthened once more to eight hours in the name of supporting some ideological position on socialism which the leadership holds? Or will the socialist state legitimise what I have already won?"*

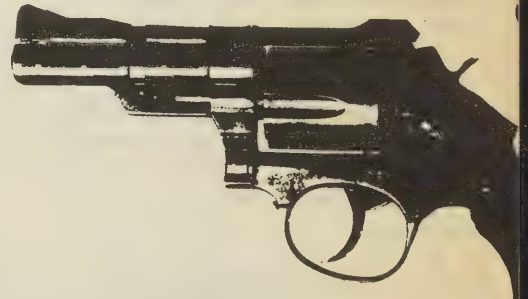
It is as concrete as that, particularly in those countries where sections of the working class are relatively strong. For these sections of workers, socialism,as espoused by some organisations, might very well mean a defeat for those who have managed to win a strong position for themselves in their struggles against imperialism.

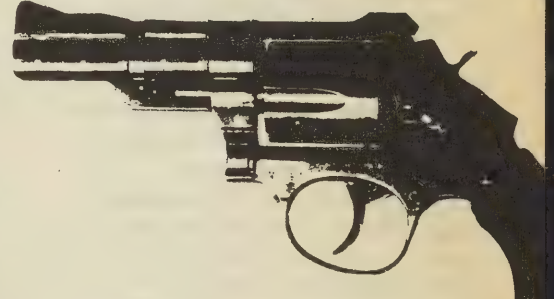
The articles below document the political manoeuvres of the imperialists which preceded the Jamaican elections.

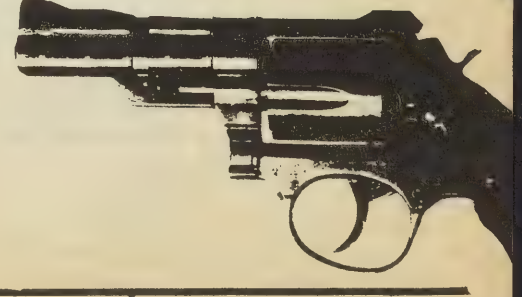
VIOLENCE IN JAMAICA











CIA AND LOCAL GUNMEN PLAN JAMAICAN COUP

"Peter Wittingham, Jamaica Labor Party (JLP) candidate for parliament, was attending his party's convention at the Montego Bay Holiday Inn on June 19, 1976, when Jamaica Security Forces arrested him. In his briefcase the police found a number of documents — later established to be in Wittingham's handwriting — which revealed the existence of a plot to overthrow the constitutionally elected government of Prime Minister Michael Manley. The code name of the conspiracy was *Operation Werewolf.*

It was the first hard evidence linking the conservative JLP to a wave of terrorism and violence which had plagued the Caribbean island for six months and which Manley and his Peoples National Party (PNP) believed to be the work of the JLP, acting in concert with the CIA to 'destabilise' the democratic-socialist government of Jamaica.

'Werewolf is now willing to take up arms against the communist regime and purge them from our shores', one document in Wittingham's briefcase read. 'Michael Manley and his government are dedicated communists and we intend to destroy them at all costs', stated another. But Wittingham, a former officer in the Jamaica Defense Forces, was more than a rhetorician of anti-communism; his documents also discussed operations and logistics. One, under the heading 'St. Ann Area' (a north coast parish) listed: '22 trained men, 100 submachine guns, 2 barrels of gunpowder, 50,000 anti-government pamphlets'.

The 'Werewolf' documents, along with tapes of secret transmissions of the Security Forces found in the possession of the deputy leader of the JLP, Senator Pearnel Charles, led the government to the conclusion that it had narrowly averted a coup by a paramilitary organisation equi[illegible] sophisticated weapons and capable of overthrowing the government by force. A week before Wittingham's arrest, a bomb factory was discovered by police in Montego Bay; 257 sticks of dynamite were seized, enough to blow up at least 40 bridges or to knock out the island's power and water systems. The discovery of the bomb factory led Manley to declare a State of Emergency, which in turn led to the arrests of Wittingham and Charles. Many companies cut back production and several bauxite plants announced they were planning to close down. At the same time, there were increasing numbers of strikes by transport, telephone, and electrical workers provoked by graduates of the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD) — known to have connections with the CIA. The JLP and the *Daily Gleaner,* Jamaica's conservative newspaper, blamed each strike, each cutback, on Manley's socialist policies. Meanwhile, as rumors of Jamaica's instability were circulated internationally, Manley found himself caught in the middle of a credit squeeze. The U.S. turned down a request for a $2.5 million A.I.D. food grant and refused to loan additional money bilaterally to Manley's government. Wealthy Jamaicans began smuggling cash out of the country, even though it was illegal to do so. The president of an ITT-owned supermarket, Winston Wong, was convicted of having taken over $200,000 out of the country to Canada; it is estimated that 100 times that amount was transferred out of Jamaica between January and June 1976. Jamaica's biggest industry, tourism, also began to suffer. Scores of hotels on the fashionable north coast were shut down, throwing thousands of workers out of jobs. The unemployment rate in Montego Bay rose to more than 50 per cent.

In December 1975, a number of unusual 'coincidences' occurred. On Christmas Eve, a delegation from the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA) came to Kingston to request technical assistance. Shortly thereafter, Manley reportedly received a phone call from Zambian president Kenneth Kaunda who asked, at Henry Kissinger's request, that Manley not recognise the MPLA. Several days later, Kissinger himself flew in, preceded by an advance party of 75 aides. He was accompanied by his wife, his son and his dog, and was ostensibly spending the holidays with Sir Harold Mitchell at Mitchell's north coast mansion. During Kissinger's 'vacation' he attended a meeting with Manley and a number of other high-level Jamaican officials and U.S. Embassy personnel. Though no information about the meeting was publicly released, it was reported by several who attended that Kissinger had come specifically to put U.S.-Jamaican

relations on the line. The Secretary of State was said to have promised U.S. A.I.D. and economic relief if the policies of socialism were abandoned and relations with the MPLA and Cuba broken off. In addition he assured Manley that the U.S. was not carrying out any CIA operations in Jamaica. (In late 1971, Kissinger personally assured the Chilean Ambassador to the U.S., Orlando Letelier — who was assassinated in Washington last September — that the CIA was not involved in any internal Chilean 'destabilization' plans.)

Not long after his meeting with Kissinger, Manley gave a speech praising Fidel Castro for having, 'saved Jamaica's black brothers and sisters in Angola from conquest by racist, apartheid South African imperialism'.

One final, ominous event took place at the end of December 1975. A new CIA station chief, **Norman Descoteaux** arrived in Kingston, replacing **Thomas J. Keenan.** He brought with him his wife, **Judy**, who was his secretary and fellow CIA worker. **Descoteaux** had served for five years in Guayaquil, Ecuador, and for two years in Buenos Aires. In Kingston, he joined a team of CIA officers working under cover at the U.S. Embassy. This team included:

— **Joel H. Beyer**, deputy chief of station; and

— **Daniel J. Calloway**, operations officer, both of whom had arrived the previous June;

— **Brian Bennett** and **Kenneth Stanton**, telecommunications officer;

— **James W. Holt** (under cover as U.S. Embassy security officer);

— **Les Thompson** (under cover as a Drug Enforcement Agency officer), both operations officers;

— **Robert Houdek**, chief political officer, who was a former staff member of the *National Security Council* and deputy chief of mission for Sierra Leone until he was expelled in 1974 for interfering in that country's internal affairs.

— **Adrienne McKenzie**, CIA secretary, lived in Kingston and was married to a well-known JLP businessman, Ian McKenzie;

— **Jerzy Hauptmann**, operations officer, arrived in Kingston later

In addition to acts of violence, there was a coordinated propaganda effort to undermine Manley's government. Unsigned articles and commentaries blamed Manley for the violence and called for his resignation; one pirate radio broadcast demanded that he be overthrown.

A group of middle-class women, led by an organization called the National Council of Women, began meeting and agitating against the Manley government. The women attempted to organise a one-day strike accompanied by a march with empty pots and pans. (Similar pots and pans demonstrations, coordinated by the CIA, were held in Chile before the 1973 coup.) But many militant women from the PNP attended the organizing meeting and presented a counter-proposal calling for more constructive ways of helping the country at a time of crisis; the National Council of Women's proposal was defeated and they were never heard from again. A few months earlier, a group calling itself the 'Silent Majority' tried to organise a demonstration of car owners to drive with their headlights on in a protest against Manley's policies. Although the group took out a half-page advertisement in the *Daily Gleaner*, the demonstration was a failure.

Anti-Castro articles appeared regularly in the press after Manley's visit to Cuba. Editorials from U.S. papers condemning Cuban communism were often reprinted. One article, signed 'contributed', traced Cuba's history before the revolution and concluded that Castro had,'deceived and betrayed the people in their belief that he represented a hope for democracy and freedom from tyranny'. The article then asked: 'When Castro took power by force in 1959, had the course of the Cuban evolution on Marxist-Leninist principles already been decided, or did he genuinely believe in a democratic system? The answer to this question contains a warning for those Latin American and Caribbean nations now embracing 'democratic' and other forms of socialism.' The next day the *Gleaner* ran an unsigned letter, presumably from the same authors, criticizing Manley for not doing away with the radical members of his party, and comparing him to an early Fidel Castro and those who would turn him leftward to Che Guevara.

Perhaps the most blatant propaganda came from a group called 'Christian Women Agitators for Truth' attacking those who criticized the U.S. or the CIA. They dragged out the example of Dr Tom Dooley, who set up a hospital in Indochina, ostensibly for humanitarian reasons, (Dooley, it was later documented, turned out to be a CIA operative, and his hospital a CIA safehouse.) Some churches and ecumenical groups in Jamaica also took part in the attempt to discredit Manley. In recent months, evangelist tents have sprouted up all over the island, bringing articulate, anti-communist and anti-government evangelists and faith healers from the U.S. to the Jamaican people. "

Counter Spy.

SWSACA SAYS — BRING THEM TO TRIAL

"Five members of the South West St. Andrew Citizens Association (SWSACA) were recently discharged by the courts from a charge of criminal libel brought against them by JLP Senator Pearnel Charles.

Judge Ian Forte did not call on them to give their defense. He said that the prosecution had not presented any case for them to answer. Judge Forte said, further, that the evidence of the police officer was unworthy of such high-ranking police officers.

Following the dismissal of the SWSACA members, the SWSACA General Secretary, Ben Munroe, gave certain information to the news media. This information had been given to the government and was to come out in the court case when SWSACA gave their defense.

The SWSACA General Secretary said that in January 1975, he was approached by the well-known terrorist, Claude Massop, and asked to work for Edward Seaga. Munroe said that he had first met Massop while they were both in the General Penitentiary. Massop thought that because Ben Munroe had been denied bail he would be against the Michael Manley government and so would be willing to work for Seaga against the governing party.

Ben Munroe said that Massop told him that since Seaga had taken over the JLP he was supported by some of the richest and most powerful capitalists in the United States of America. Massop said that these capitalists had made $25 million available to Seaga and more money was to come when elections were called.

Ben Munroe said that Massop asked him to meet with Seaga and told him of a plan JLP leaders had to train an army of gunmen to launch terror on front-line PNP supporters. Massop said that they would go after 2,000 PNP supporters. Without these people, the PNP would not be able to fight an election.

This plan was to be carried out directly by the trained gunmen, called 'Freedom Fighters'. Ben Munroe said that Massop told him that Rasta youth, who did not defend politics would be brought into this army of terrorists. They were to be told that they were not fighting politics, but revolution, Massop said.

The SWSACA General Secretary said that apart from this, Massop said that the plan also included organising economic sabotage. The Jamaican economy was to be smashed up and as

things got harder for the working people, Seaga was to play the role of a prophet in Parliament, warning of doom and that the government couldn't manage the country. The plan was to use this to turn the people against the Manley government and so bring it down.

Munroe said he told Massop that he would work with Seaga. But he turned over a document with all that he had been told to government officials. After this, Munroe said, he got several messages from Pearnel Charles asking that he meet him. Munroe said that Charles sent to say that if he was worried about money, that was no problem. He (Charles) could give him money, a house and a car.

SWSACA therefore decided that the people had to be warned. During this time, Munroe got information about a meeting which Pearnel Charles was to hold at the Hugh Sherlock All-Age School on October 12. SWSACA infiltrated people into the meeting and so was able to get eye-witness reports.

SWSACA told the community of the plans in the meeting. One hundred and five names of PNP supporters were called out to be killed and the youths at the meeting were given guns to kill these people, Ben Munroe said.

Because of the pamphlet put out by SWSACA the people were warned.

Munroe said that Charles got them charged with criminal libel, hoping that it would look as if SWSACA was lying. Instead, it was the JLP witnesses, Ross, Anderson and Charles who were found to be lying.

Near the end of the trial, Charles' first statement which he had made to the police but which had 'miraculously disappeared', was found. The prosecutor did not want the SWSACA defense lawyers to see the statement and the judge had to rule that they should. In this statement, Charles had said he was in Annotto Bay on the day of the Hugh Sherlock meeting. In his evidence in court, he said he was in St. Mary at the home of Ross.

SWSACA has turned over all evidence to the Director of Public Prosecutions. SWSACA is calling for Charles to be brought to trial on charges of sedition, and conspiracy to murder. SWSACA is also demanding that Ross, Anderson and Charles be brought to trial for perjury, since it was clearly shown that they lied during their evidence in court."

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"I attended the Congress of the Peoples National Party of Jamaica in Kingston in September and I have to make the following observations:

1. The country which is governed by the Peoples National Party is threatened both from inside and outside by right-wing forces financed by wealthy Jamaican businessmen living in the United States as well as by transnational companies, in particular the bauxite industry.

2. The approximately 300 murders which took place in Jamaica until the government imposed a state of emergency last June were directly linked to these hostile activities and most of the persons killed were loyal supporters of the PNP.

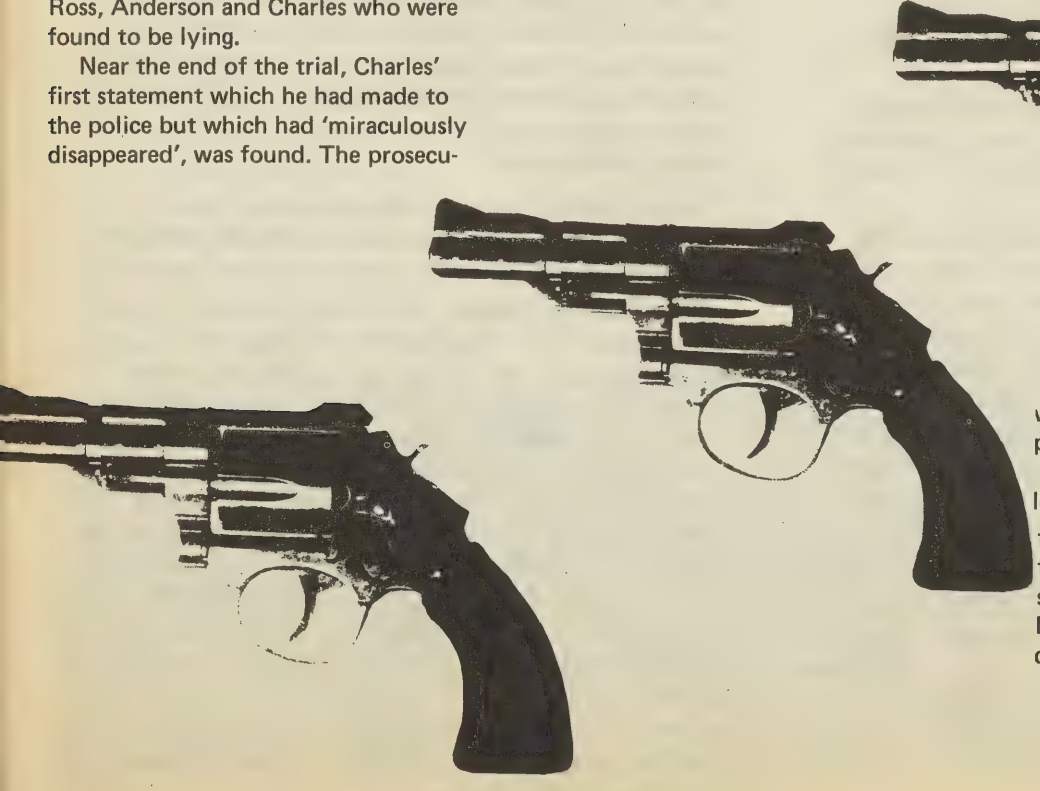
3. The gunmen captured by the Jamaican authorities were almost exclusively persons with a criminal record who executed the crimes for money, the source of which is clearly abroad.

4. The country finds itself in a very difficult economic situation largely due to the fallen price of bauxite but also in view of the almost total lack of investments in the private sector.

5. The country is also facing abroad, and in particular in the United States, a very hostile press, insinuating that Michael Manley is a communist, following the Cuban model. This has led to a decline of tourism, one of the major foreign currency earners of the nation.

6. The fact that Jamaica has successfully tried to establish friendly relations with neighbouring Cuba is being misinterpreted as a conspiracy to overthrow the democratic institutions in Jamaica and to replace them by a Cuban style dictatorship.

7. The fact is that Jamaica and Cuba could very well establish very fruitful trade relations as their industries are complimentary. It is also a fact that the Cuban revolution, not because of its communist character but because of its triumph over American imperialism, is viewed with sympathy in Jamaica and in particular by the Peoples National Party.



8. The party however, through its leadership, have made quite clear that the Cuban model would not be suitable for Jamaica where only democratic socialism as defined in the Frankfurt Declaration of the Socialist International could prevail."

Hans Janitschek,
General Secretary,
Socialist International,
October 7, 1976.

'BANGHABIR' TOURS BRITAIN

To Bangladeshis, General Ata-Ul-Gani Osmani is known as 'Banghabir', 'the brave man of Bengal'. At present he is in Britain promoting his Bangladesh National Janata Party. Osmani speaks to packed houses of Bengali workers in London, the Midlands, the north, outlining his party's policies and appealing to the migrant workforce's thirst for news from back home.

The clampdown on the press and free expression in Bengal, brought about by the internal coup within the government of Bangladesh in early December, makes news from the country a rare commodity.

In the first days of December, General Zia-Ur-Rahman couped the dissenting elements in the government of which he was army chief. Zia imprisoned the former President, Khondker Mushtaque Ahmed, and took over the reins of government from the nominal President, Abu Sayed Sayem. He assumed the role of Chief Martial Law Administrator himself. Following the top level arrests, 2000 people were taken into custody, some of them from within the ranks of the army.

One of the first acts of the new martial law chief has been the suspension of elections which his own administration had scheduled for February next year.

Since November 1975, when Zia emerged as the leader of the military faction which was running the country, the people of Bangladesh have been promised a return to 'orderly democratic political activity'. In spite of that promise, Zia has concentrated on rooting out political opposition to himself in the army and in the country at large.

In July 1976, Zia put Abu Taher, the one-legged army hero who was a leading light in the revolutionary group within the armed forces, on secret trial. Taher was executed and other radical officers were imprisoned for life.

Since July, reports reaching Britain indicate that there is widespread sabotage by the revolutionary underground in the country. On the morning of November 7, the JSD (the Nationalist Socialist Party) put out its manifesto of '12 demands'. In the middle of November, anti-government activists blasted the Chittagong power station and paralysed the chief port of the country. A curfew has been imposed on the cities and special police forces have been stationed in the restive rural districts of Sylhet and Tangail.

In his London meetings, General Osmani made no comment on the open dissent within Bangladesh. He told his audiences that in Britain he was the guest of a reception committee, consisting mainly of Bangladeshi businessmen, and that his party would set up an organisation in this country after his visit.

In answer to questions, Osmani said his party was for 'disciplined social democracy'. He believed that the leader of the country should be elected by the people of Bangladesh and not established through the authority of the gun. If elected, when elections are allowed, the Janata Party would denationalise the jute industries, and ask Bangladeshi businessmen to invest in their country. It would follow a secular line and safeguard the rights of the minority communities of Hindus, Christians and Buddhists. It would forestall the armed revolt of the tribal population of the country by ensuring tribal civil rights and developing the tribal areas through education and capital investment.

In the light of events in Bangladesh, Osmani's British tour must be seen as an important propaganda platform for parliamentary politics in the country.

"The Bengali workers in Britain are a very important section of the Bangladeshi working class", said one of the members of Osmani's audience in Naz cinema in London's East End. "We send money and news back home and we have a tremendous influence on what our relatives and people in our villages think of political figures."

In 1970 and '71, in the period before and after the Bangladesh liberation war, Mujibur Rahman came to Britain because he knew that we who work and live here were the international platform for Bangladesh politics. Osmani knows that too. He said that he recognises the importance of the Bengali workforce abroad, and encourages it to join the movement in this country to fight any sort of racism and to win rights for ourselves and our families.

LETTER FROM INDIA

The amendment of the Bonus Act in September 1975, indicates very clearly the class nature of the Indira regime.

If it hasn't been an issue all this time, it's simply because the pinch was only felt in October 1976, when the bonus fell due.

Bonus payments have always been regarded as a deferred wage, and workers plan on using the statutory minimum of 8.33 per cent of their wages for all the purchases they couldn't afford during the year.

The amended Act, however, does away with this definition and was introduced, incidentally, by the Indira government itself a few years ago.

Now, bonus isn't automatically given. Even a company which made a loss was earlier compelled to pay it, though it could claim tax deductions on this score in a subsequent year. Instead, it is now a payment made to persons employed in certain establishments on the basis of profits or productivity.

The minimum has been sharply brought down to a pathetic four per cent of the 'calculable surplus' which is what is left after the gross profits of four years are taken and allowances are made for depreciation, direct taxes and returns on paid-up capital, and so on.

It is calculated, for instance, that even if a company makes a profit of Rs 20 million in a particular year, it may not have to pay the bonus.

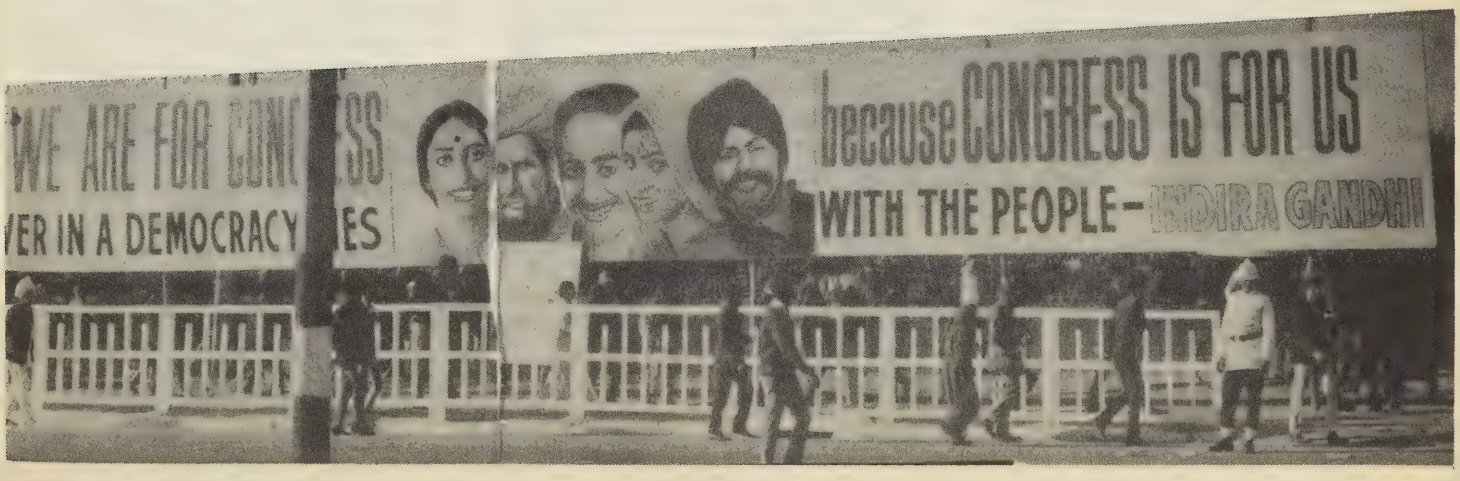
In spite of the emergency and the ban on strikes, workers in certain areas have resisted this move. In West Bengal, there were several strikes, from the engineering works of the Indian Standard Wagon Company at Howrah, to the tea gardens of Darjeeling and Doors (173 gardens went on strike). The workers from the recently nationalized Braithwaite (Wagon) Company, Jessops and others refused their management's offer.

In Bombay, a poster campaign and arm bands protesting the issue were to have been launched, but the CPM-led unions and others couldn't sustain it. Instead, at certain places like the Spring Mills, belonging to the Bombay Dyeing group, workers struck on October 15.

When other mill workers also responded, the Maharashtra government was forced to push mill owners to give an 'ad hoc' payment of Rs 200 per worker, which could be refunded if the mill makes a loss next year.

In the Indian Telephone Industries in Bangalore, workers battled with the police over bonus and five people were killed by police bullets.

Rose de Bahama,
Bombay, India.



EAST END AT YOUR FEET

A member of the *Race Today* Collective, Farrukh Dhondy, was commissioned by the publishers, Macmillans, to produce six short stories aimed at reluctant readers in British schools.

Farrukh created the short stories around the lives of young Asians in the East End of London. The finished work was titled *East End At Your Feet.* Following publication date, several national newspapers published protests and comments generated by the book. Below, we publish extracts from the national newspapers and Farrukh's reply to them.

"Allegations of obscenity have been made against a 112-page book designed for slow or reluctant teenage readers at schools. The book contains four-letter words and suggestive passages.

One passage quotes at length from the words of a record made by the Rolling Stones. This passage appears in one of a series of short, well-written stories about relationships between Asians and whites in the East End.

Another story tells of a girl with pimples who is told that only the sex act can rid her of them.

Mrs June Dunster, mother of three girls, two of them at Kidbrooke, told me that Jane, 14, had brought the book home.

'I was told that that was what life was all about, and I told him [the deputy head] that this might be how other people lived but not my family.

'I agree that this book might easily be picked up at any trashy market bookstall, but I would not have expected to see it in a school. The language in it makes the recent 'Nationwide' programme look like Andy Pandy.'

Mrs Dunster referred to the programme on which a 'pop' group called the Sex Pistols used bad language.

Miss Isabel Sheperdson, headmistress of Kidbrooke School, which has 2,100 girls, said she had not heard about the complaint of the mother and had not seen this particular book. She praised the Topliner series by Macmillan, which is avidly read by otherwise reluctant readers.

'It is a very good, popular series, and it is possible that this book might have slipped in along with others without teachers having seen it first. But I should say that we have had parents complaining even about Chaucer. It all depends how books such as these are handled.'

Mr Aidan Chambers, general editor of the Topliner series at Macmillan, defended the publication of this book, which sells at 40p a copy.

'Children are mature enough at 13 or 14 to take this kind of language. They hear it every day, speak it and see it. In fact they know language much more extreme than the examples you quote out of context and we have come to terms with it.

'This is one of the first books ever to have been written by a black writer for children in this country and concerns Asians living in London.

'As a piece of writing, it is accurate and representational. We did not publish this without first giving it very careful thought and we certainly consider it responsible.'

In fairness to the author and publisher, it should be stated that the Asians portrayed in the book regard the language as 'filthy' and not the kind they would use."

John Izbicki,
Education Correspondent,
The Daily Telegraph, **17.12.76**

"The editor of a teenager's book describing life in the East End today denied it was obscene.

Mr Aidan Chambers said:
'I would have regarded it as irresponsible not to publish this book. It is extremely well written and portrays life as it really is.'

Written by Indian teacher, Mr Farrukh Dhondy, and called *East End At Your Feet*, the book was today called 'obscene' by housewife Mrs June Dunster.

She said that three weeks ago her 14-year-old daughter Jane brought the book home from her school, Kidbrooke Comprehensive in Corelli Road, Blackheath.

Mrs Dunster, 34, of Greenbay Road, Charlton, said:
'My daughter was upset when she was given it to read by her teacher.

'I had a look at it. In my view it is inflammatory, obscene and incites racial hatred. I don't send my children to school to learn that kind of rubbish.'

Mrs Dunster complained to the deputy head but was told: 'it reflects life.'

Mr Chambers said: 'We have printed thousands of copies of this book and before Mrs Dunster complained we had only received one other.

'Children are mature enough at 13 or 14 to take this kind of language.

'The Community Relations Commission in their journal earlier this month published an extremely favourable review.' "

James Gilheany,
Evening News, **17.12.76.**

"A schoolbook for teenagers which contains four-letter words and suggestive passages will not be withdrawn by the publishers.

Several teachers and parents have complained that it is unsuitable reading for children.

But the publishers say opposition to the book — written by an Asian teacher — is being drummed up by the National Front.

One parent, Mrs June Dunster, was angry and embarrassed when her daughter was given the book to read at Kidbrooke Comprehensive, Blackheath, and complained about it to the school.

Yesterday the headmistress, Miss Isabel Sheperdson, said that although she hadn't seen the book, it had been approved by the English teacher.

The book is one of Macmillan's Topliner series which has been a tremendous help in teaching teenagers who are reluctant readers, she said.

A spokesman for the Inner London Education Authority said their English inspector would be looking at the book. "

Daily Mail, **18.12.76.**

"A sorry new example in flabby thinking is set by staff at one of London's largest comprehensive schools, Kidbrooke of Blackheath.

To help 'slow and reluctant' readers, teenage pupils were given a book denounced by one mother as obscene and racialist.

Its text was spiced with four-letter words, it carried a quotation from the Rolling Stones who are better known for the beat and noise of their music than for the sensitivity of their language.

Included in it was also the story of a pimply girl who is given the nonsense advice that only the sex act will get rid of her spots.

And what is the answer given to the mother who protests that this is hardly the stuff to broaden the mind of her 14-year-old daughter?

'It reflects life,' said a senior teacher.

Well, teachers at Kidbrooke and elsewhere should know that life is a many splendoured thing.

Just as you cannot learn all about a city by merely touring its slums, so you cannot teach 'life' with the help of old wives' tales and four-letter words."

Evening News, **Editorial.**

FARRUKH DHONDY REPLIES

Good journalists defend their views, bad journalists defend their impartiality. Publishers defend their markets. Poets, novelists and short story writers, by convention, shut their mouths when they are attacked — books should defend themselves.

As a member of the *Race Today* Collective, I am, by definition, critical of convention. That's not the only reason I'm willing to use the columns of *Race Today* to take position on *East End At Your Feet* which, according to a quote in *The Daily Telegraph,* makes the Sex Pistols sound like Andy Pandy. I won't defend my cleanliness as a writer. I refuse to defend the morality of the stories I sell. I defend myself as a school teacher. My work involves the introduction to the young, of books that portray the life of a culturally and politically significant section of the British population.

Since Friday, December 17, when *The Daily Telegraph* published its story under the headline **Slow Readers' Book Obscene, Says Girl Pupil's Mother,** reporters have been ringing up Macmillans, the publishers, asking if the book is to be withdrawn.

"I agree that this book might easily be picked up at any trashy market bookstall, but I would not have expected to see it in a school," says Mrs Dunster, the only begetter, so far, of the demand to keep it from school students. Trashy markets — ok, school classrooms — no way.

Now why? Is there really a section of pupils in British schools whose parents believe that school is an environment which insulates the teenager from the traditional linguistic robustness of British working class life?

Is the generation gap so impassable in the home that a teenager will not tell mummy that he or she can hear a drizzle of strong language amid the often stormy antagonisms of almost any secondary school?

Will teachers and parents still insist, for all the world, that *their* homes, *their* classrooms and playgrounds are guaranteed to wash the teenage brain whiter than white?

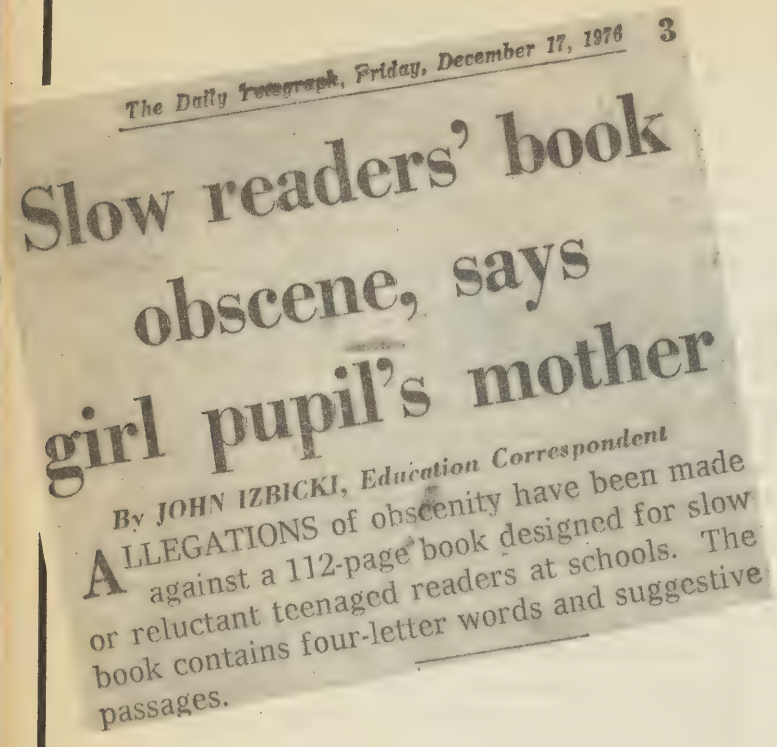
I don't believe that is it at all. That is not what they mean. The last book I remember running into this sort of publicity, was Christopher Searle's *Classrooms of Resistance*. Chris had a much more sophisticated battery of critics to face, because they came from the high ranks of educational journalism. They attempted to take him apart because he believes that children should be taught in English lessons, through their own writing preferably, to empathise with the British labour movement. *East End At Your Feet* was written with no such ambition.

It was written because I was approached by a senior editor in Macmillans, who was obviously concerned that very few books about black teenagers had reached the British schools. I wrote these six stories keeping in mind that they were for 'reluctant' readers, those thousands in the school population who can read but won't. Those teenagers who regard prose as work, poetry as the pastime of 'poofs', comics as mythological journalism, and the Bay City Rollers or Big Youth or Mohammed Rafi as the only poetry close to their pulse. The Topliner series of Macmillans, in which my book appears, has a lot of good books and a lot of bad ones, but they exist because a publishing house and some writers believe that this 'reluctance' of the young readers is not impenetrable.

Teachers, those who have to deal with this reluctance in exchange for their wage, have several explanations for it and ways of tackling it. All of us are aware that this reluctance cannot be patronised. Least of all can it be fobbed off with writing that is evasive, hypocritical, or with stories which treat the young mind as though it were the only plant in a parochial greenhouse.

I didn't invent the material in the book. The experience it reflects is an imaginative transformation of my time in British schools; of my life as an Asian in Britain; and of the people and politics I encounter working as a member of the *Race Today* Collective in the East End of London.

Aren't these the real objections to the book? Will the man who brought the story to the *Evening News* deny that he is a member of the National Front? That when he and Mrs Dunster, the parent from Kidbrooke, complain about the book being 'racialist' and 'an incitement to racial hatred' they mean that for the first time perhaps, young whites, blacks and Asians in schools can read fiction which exposes the racialist guttersnipes and hoodlums who attack black

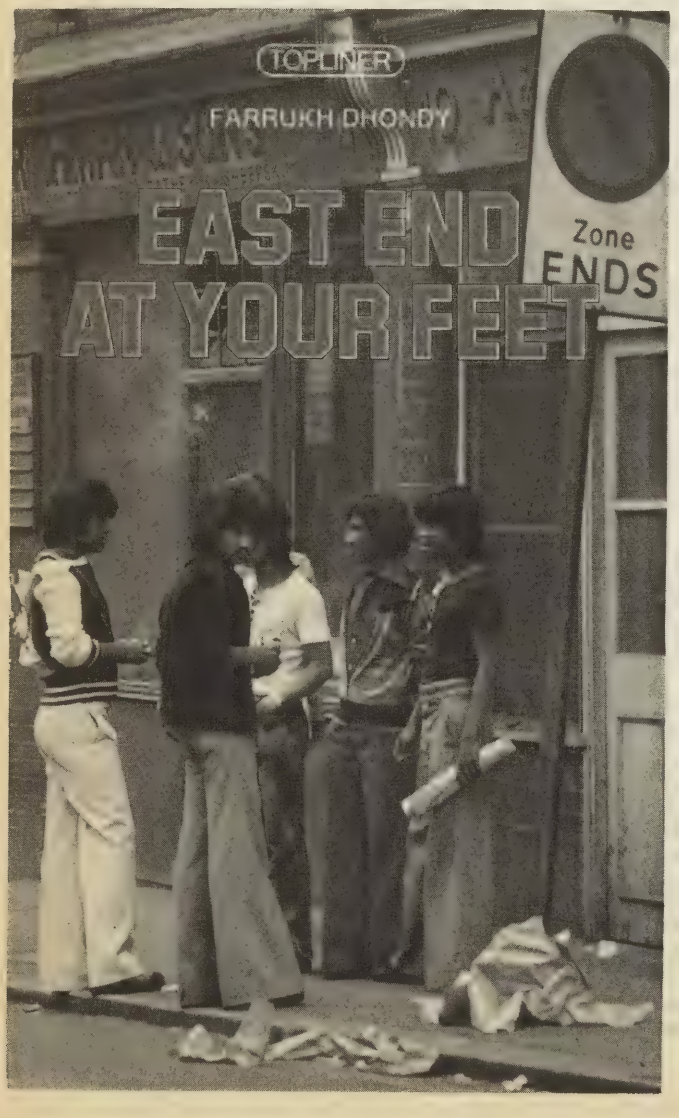


The Daily Telegraph, Friday, December 17, 1976 3

Slow readers' book obscene, says girl pupil's mother

By JOHN IZBICKI, Education Correspondent

ALLEGATIONS of obscenity have been made against a 112-page book designed for slow or reluctant teenaged readers at schools. The book contains four-letter words and suggestive passages.



people in this country?

The story entitled KBW (Keep Britain White) is a recreation of several events I witnessed on housing estates in the East End. In the other stories I have tried to be honest and optimistic about the interaction between black youngsters and white ones.

Even though the white youngsters I meet may occasionally mouth a received prejudice, they are not dedicated to the political policies that seek to make whites fight blacks. The Asian teenagers I meet are far from being the helpless victims of the culture crossings they make or the cultural tensions which tug at them. As Leila was generous enough to say in her review of the book in last month's *Race Today*, (before the *Evening News* wrote an editorial calling 'realism the refuge of scoundrels') the stories intend to portray the confidence of the Asian teenager here and now in Britain.

Such are my good intentions, but the history of curricular change in Britain is littered with these, just as textbooks intended for use in English lessons, from Chaucer, through Lawrence and Joyce to Sillitoe, and the stories collected by Penguin, are dotted with words that the squeamish or hypocritical would wince at.

The mother of the Kidbrooke pupil who complained, the National Front man who peddled her objections and the editors and reporters of *The Daily Telegraph*, the *Daily Mail* and the *Evening News* were not particularly concerned with my intentions or particularly concerned with scouring the stock-cupboards of English departments throughout secondary education.

To read the editorial that the *News* wrote on Monday, December 20, one wouldn't know that *East End At Your Feet* was, uniquely, about Asian youth. It was the sort of ignorant criticism that takes issue with the Old Testament for smut, without saying that it was the religious book of the Jews.

Perhaps the editors, who chose to run the story without investigating the intentions of those who planted it on them, thought they were firing a shot in the death-to-progressive-education duel. If that's their intention, it is only fair to let them know that since publication, very many teachers and literally hundreds of pupils have reacted with interest, if not enthusiasm, to the unusual focus of the book's material.

The reviewer of the Ebury English Centre's books broadsheet, a respected trade journal, recommends the book as a CSE set. Rosemary Stone, a professional 'racialism' watcher, recommends it in the Community Relations Commission journal as one of the two examples of books in which, "prejudice is realistically and sensitively dealt with", in which black people in British society "reaffirm their pride in their identity". No mention of the Rolling Stone's quote. No prurient search for 'obscenity'.

As for the other charge, 'incitement to racial hatred', the *News*, *The Telegraph* and the *Mail* have a damn cheek, with their track record, and if seeing through Asian eyes amounts to racialism, well, I shall never beat the rap.

(Letters continued from page 241)

The first contribution was a highly-coloured and partisan statement from a member of the Jamaica Freedom League, Mr Oscar Henriques, on the 'communist' nature of the present Jamaican government. I tried to give a more reasoned account of events in Jamaica, which I had just returned from, but the programme's editors, in their wisdom, cut my short contribution so brutally that what I had to say became completely distorted. I was particularly angry about a remark taken out of context which appeared to have me saying that I believed in the possibility of civil war in Jamaica in the foreseeable future.

I'd like to quote briefly from the letter of apology I obtained from the BBC in order to restore some of my credibility as a commentator on Jamaican affairs. Alistair Osborne, the editor in charge of evening current affairs programmes on radio, writes: ". . . . I have to admit that the cuts which were made probably had distorted what you had to say. I am sorry if this has caused you any embarrassment or reflected upon your professional standing."

Andrew Pollak,
Contributing Editor,
Latin American Newsletters.

Dear Race Today,

The purpose of this letter is to draw your attention to one very simple proposition — the right of one human being to marry another, without regard to race, nationality or colour. In Nazi Germany racial intermarriage was forbidden; in South Africa it is forbidden. In Great Britain there is no such prohibition, the law even protects the right of a foreign man to marry an English woman and to live in England.

It is stated very simply in Para. 23 of the Immigration Rules of June 1974:

> A man admitted in a temporary capacity who marries a woman settled here should on application have the time limit on his stay removed.

The law is absolutely clear but, as far as it is administered, it is only the figment of some law-maker's imagination. It is held in complete contempt by civil servants and ministers of the crown.

Recently, a Turkish man who married a British girl and applied for the right of abode, was sent a letter by the Home Office announcing their intention to deport him and stating that the Secretary of State did not recognise the validity of his marriage. The marriage was neither bigamous nor incestuous; it was perfectly legal and valid, according to the Registrar of Marriages and the laws of this country. The only objection the Secretary of State could have taken was that the marriage enabled another 'foreigner' to enter our shores. This is not an isolated example.

In almost every case where an English girl marries a foreigner, particularly if the man is *coloured*, the man's right of abode in this country and the protection of its law are denied him. Instead, the Immigration Authorities mount a campaign of harassment and use the police to interrogate, intimidate, humiliate and sometimes assault citizens whose only crime is their ethnic origin and their insistence on their legal rights. The process is pernicious and illegal. A married applicant goes to the Immigration Office for his revocation of conditions, a transaction which should take five minutes to accomplish. He is fobbed off with artificially created delays and told that the matter will be 'considered'. Shortly after, the police pay regular visits to the marital home, demand to see the marital bed, ask disgusting questions such as, "Has your wife got big tits?" insist that the married couple come to the police station where they are further threatened and intimidated. All this in order to dissuade the applicant from continuing to pursue his legal rights.

The Home Office has admitted as much in a recent *News of the World* article which exposed the 'shame of an English girl who married an Arab'. The Home Office spokesman said that in all cases where a marriage of convenience was suspected, the police were called in to investigate whether the marriage was proceeding *along traditional lines.* This is an absolute moral outrage to which M.P.'s, civil servants and community leaders have either turned a blind eye or positively abandoned.

When was the convenience of the marriages of countless European royal families ever investigated? A convenience contrived simply to more easily plunder the wealth of Europe. When were aspersions ever cast on the Greek presence in Buckingham Palace? What, indeed, happened to the only English monarch who married for love?

Civil servants at the Home Office and ministers of the crown have reduced themselves to the moral level of the gutter press and the dignity of English democracy is putrefying with them.

The immigrant vote in this country has never really been put to the test. It may be foolish and naive to appeal to the morality and humanity of the members of the House of Commons. This may be an occasion, however, when political wisdom and natural justice have a common cause.

Reuben Davis,
London N4.

CARIBBEAN DIALOGUE

Caribbean Dialogue is published by New Beginning Movement in Toronto, Canada and distributed in Britain by *Race Today* Collective Association.

Caribbean Dialogue is an information service that links the struggles of workers, peasants and students in the Caribbean and Caribbean workers in the metropolitan centres.

Below is a list of back issues which are available from our office at 40p each, including postage and packing.

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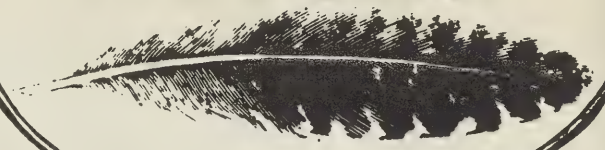
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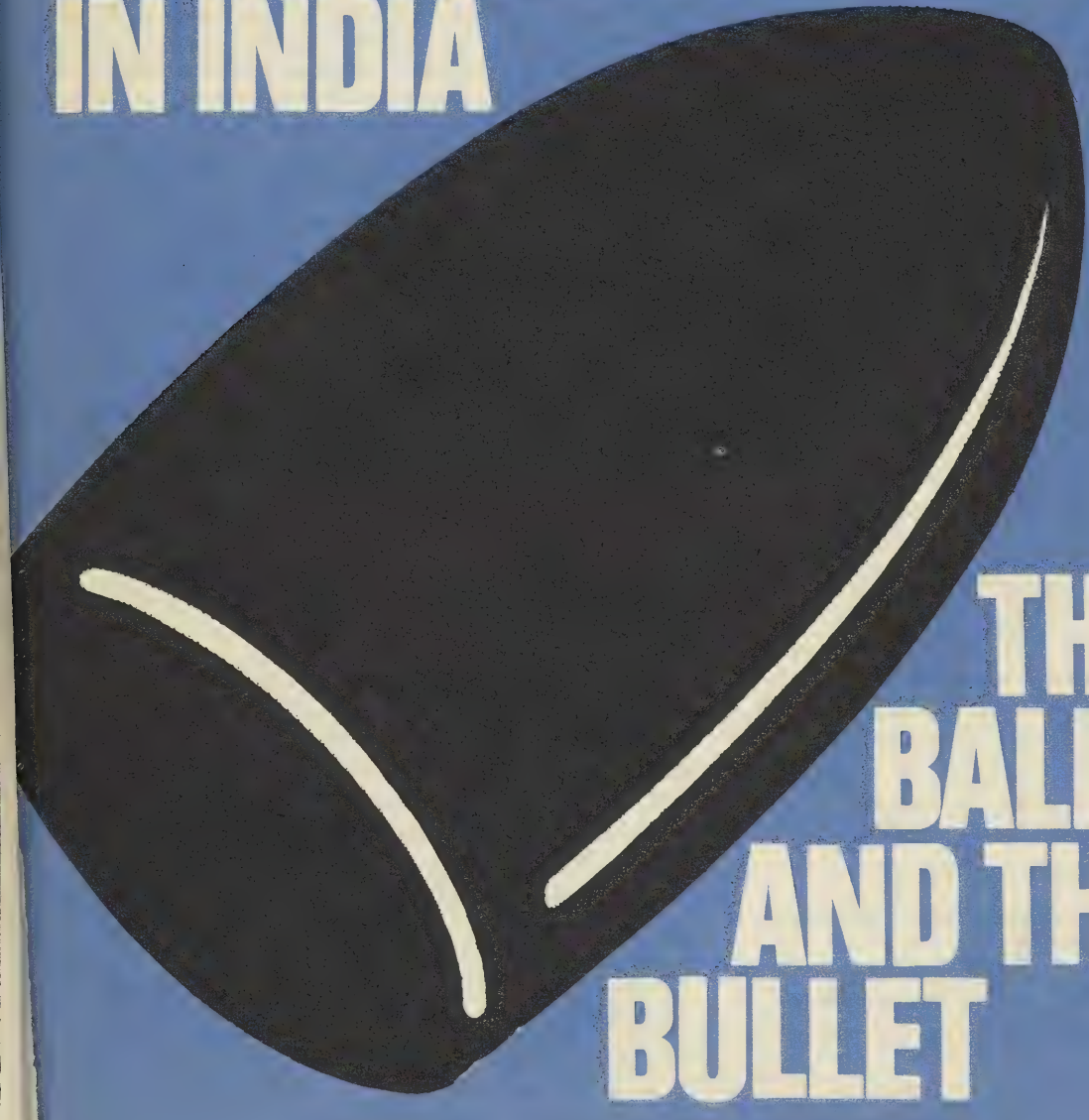
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Race Today

VOICE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY IN BRITAIN FEBRUARY 1977 25p

ELECTIONS IN INDIA



THE BALLOT AND THE BULLET

CARNIVAL '77: THE THREAT IS FROM WITHIN

LETTERS

Dear Editor,
From time to time, the Press Council has noted criticisms of the British Press in connection with its treatment of certain racial issues, and the Press Council, in discharge of its every day function of investigating complaints from anyone about any newspaper or periodical in the United Kingdom, has always been ready to investigate such criticisms and has adjudicated in many instances.

Of course, complaints to the Press Council have to be supported by evidence, and the facts have to be established to the Council's satisfaction, and they must disclose conduct which is in breach of the commonly accepted standards of conduct of the British Press. If this is shown, then there is public censure of the newspaper or periodical concerned.

In its general consideration of some of the problems involved, the Council has given attention to a radio programme broadcast, on June 13, 1976 in which you took part. The Complaints Committee of the Council, which comprises equal numbers of Press and non-Press members, has noted that, in that programme. you made general criticisms of a number of newspapers, although many of your remarks appear to have been a general view of a society of which you are critical.

I am of course depending upon the transcript of the programme. However, if you feel you have a complaint to make in precise terms, in connection with the performance of any particular newspaper or periodical, I should be glad to hear from you about it, and if the circumstances are appropriate, and it conforms with your wish, I will be prepared to submit the matter for investigation by the Complaints Committee of the Council.

Would you kindly let me have your comments on this proposal?

Noel Paul,
The Press Council.

The June issue of Race Today, carries an article, 'Reviewing the Press', (pages 137–140), which documents the role of some national dailies in fermenting the anti-black riots, that took place on the nation's streets during the summer of last year.

You are free to submit the information to the Complaints Committee of the Press Council for investigation.

By way of correction, the June 13 radio programme referred to in your letter was in fact a television programme, The Editors.

ED.

Dear Race Today,
Your article on Bonfire Night '76 in Chapeltown seems to have gone almost unremarked (*Race Today*, November '76). I agreed with your overall position, but would like to add one or two points.

It's right to attack the race relations establishment. Their aim is simply to keep black youth off the streets – they never intend to challenge the basic causes of inequality and oppression.

But it's not the whole story to suggest that they alone "imprisoned the bonfire". A few adults did want the youth to have their bonfires on the streets: but most did not. In reporting and commenting on the 1975 Bonfire Night incidents both *Race Today* and *Chapeltown News* failed to record the fear and dismay felt by the majority of parents. The mass support we called for from parents was noticeably absent, and it's no help to pretend otherwise. This time round, parents were only too keen to have an 'organised' 'safe' bonfire party.

As for the youth – they did support the defendants, but it wasn't just the 'absence of leadership' which stopped them having street bonfires this year. They made a very sensible judgement of the balance of forces on November 4 and 5. With police in pairs on *every* street corner it would have been suicide to have the traditional confrontation. Any 'leader' who suggested otherwise would have been mad. (One step backward, two steps forward.)

What now needs to be discussed are the real problems which face any militant leadership emerging in Chapeltown. The white activists (I'm one of them) have been part of that problem. My position in *Chapeltown News* has always been that we could not lead, that only an autonomous black group can do that. But we felt we had to take a stand, which amounted to leadership, over the Bonfire Night issue, even though it meant us making the old mistake of substituting for the masses. I, for one, came in for a lot of criticism, some of it justified, from both militant and conservative blacks during the trial. By the time this bonfire night came round we did, as you say, have a "mood of defeat". We felt we were in no position to take a leadership role.

Recently, a big step towards resolving this aspect of the problem has been taken. A group of young blacks now run *Chapeltown News*, and they are capable of becoming an authentic militant leadership. But big problems remain: the divisions between the various sections of Chapeltown's working class (Asians, West Indian, white), the dead weight of the present conservative West Indian leadership, the relationship between white and black militants etc.

I'm optimistic that these problems will be sorted out in time. The new *Chapeltown News* will confront the old leadership and will win. There are signs of cooperation, while maintaining organisational autonomy, between whites and blacks in the struggle against racism and fascism. For this struggle to be effective, we have to find the policies and activities which will advance the interests of the white, Asian and West Indian working class. Time will tell, but there isn't much of it. Seize the time!

Max Farrar,
Chapeltown, Leeds.

EDITORIAL

WHAT'S TO BE DONE WITH POWELL

Powell is the one politician in Britain who has a battery of amplifiers and an army of shorthand writers to transmit and record his cries from the wilderness of political isolation.

Time and again he returns to the theme of immigration, and the theme of the political threat posed by the existence of black people in the cities of Britain and in key sections of the British economy. He is the one voice among the party politicians of Britain on whom the lessons of Notting Hill and the political potential of the uprising of black workers is not lost.

Listen to the man: "The coloured population of over two million which is predominantly concentrated in the central areas of the metropolis and other key urban and industrial centres of England does posess a power which would not accrue to a mere random sample of two million persons similarly located but not perceived or perceiving themselves as distinct from the rest."

Enoch has not always sung this hymn to black political power. As a Minister in the pre-Labour government of the 50's and early 60's, Powell's Ministry of Health was actually responsible for importing and maintaining blacks from the West Indies, from India and Pakistan in the National Health Service. In 1964, when the Immigration Bill, which limited and controlled the movement of workers from the ex-colonies to the homeland of capitalism, was being debated, Powell was silent. Then, in 1968 he made his 'rivers of blood' speech, attempting to tap, in the mass of the working class, those elements of opinion and support which would attack black people, our presence and our rights in this country, in a nationalist revival.

Today, Powell is not dreaming a nightmare. He is not conjuring from a fevered imagination the blood that may stain the green grass of England's pleasant land. He is describing, as an enemy describes, the strength of a section of the working class which has proved its ability and intention to turn this potential into visible and viable political power.

Listen again: "I have been describing the forces which invest the New Commonwealth immigrant and immigrant-descended population in England with the sort of power which cannot, in the nature of things, remain unexerted. The consequences of New Commonwealth immigration are not static, they are dynamic The picture is not that of a province or corner of the country occupied by a distinct and growing population, though that would be perilous enough. It is of the occupation, more and more intense, of key areas – and, it may be added, of key functions – in the heartlands of the Kingdom."

Powell makes it clear, to critics and admirers alike, that he acknowledges this power of black people with extreme reluctance. The antidote for him is the force of white nationalism that exists in the working class. There are two alternatives he poses, to this drive of black working class power: the state must take a stand and not be driven to affording the black population any concessions, real or sham. It must make no acknowledgement of concessions through fear. The frustrations of the white working class must be turned into a movement to stop the blacks.

Harping on the second and final solution, Powell predicts 'civil war'. The whites must not join us in our assault on the police in Notting Hill, in our demand for an extension of the social wage, in the struggle around housing, in our refusal to do shit work, in our opposition to the social contract in industrial employment. They must fight us. They must not stand by bemused or confused by the battle, between blacks and the state. They must unite behind the slogan to chuck us out of the country so as to promote the conditions for civil war and heavy state intervention.

Apart from this call to civil war, Powell has nothing to offer the white masses whom he addresses through the loud-hailers of the British press. His economic policy of the nineteenth century free market cuts no ice. As an Irish MP (he represents the protestants of South Down at Westminster) he has failed to represent the anti-British sentiments of the Irish Protestant members of the Westminster Parliament who want to break away from direct British rule. He is the most popular leper in Conservative politics, flirting through his black speeches, with fringe groups like the National Front, who draw power from his sentiments, and votes from his endorsements of their programmes of repatriation.

Powell has been the most famous loser in the Conservative Party, refusing to serve under Heath, being denounced now by the newcomers in Conservative politics such as Winston Churchill Jnr. who have accepted the influence of the black vote in their constituencies and are seeking to organise it under Conservative Asian and West Indian leadership.

What's to be done about Powell? Various organisations within the race relations industry have called for his prosecution under the Race Relations Act. A Labour MP has construed his words as provocation likely to lead to a breach of the peace. The editorials in the press, following his speech, concluded that Powell had put himself beyond the pale of respectable politics and debate by seeking to stimulate antagonism between blacks and whites.

And yet, prosecutions under any Act will not stop Powell. Neither will denunciations of his logic in the Guardian or criticisms of his views in the Spectator. Here is a man whose political power and future depends on the white working class reaction to his call to arms, against the black population. He has described the potential of the black movement in terms which no politician has dared to use. The defeat of Powell means the defeat of the nationalism that is still part of the exploitable cultural consciousness of sections of the white working class. That defeat cannot be brought about by any 'ideological' effort, by any 'raising of consciousness' through leaflets and resolutions. It can only be brought about when white workers recognise, as a contribution to their own struggles, the power, the method, the very mood of blacks who make a move on the streets of Notting Hill, in the Asian ghettoes of London, on the shop floors of factories, in the industrial centres of Babylon.

Race Today Collective

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CARNIVAL '77
THE THREAT IS FROM WITHIN

BY DARCUS HOWE

The fate of the annual West Indian carnival festival hangs in the balance, and not for the same reasons as it did in 1976. Then, the practice of celebrating carnival on the streets of Notting Hill was challenged by local white residents, the police and the local council. The three groups campaigned to have the carnival removed from the streets and imprisoned in the White City stadium. They lost that struggle.

This year, that particular challenge lies dormant, even though there are those, local councillors in the main, who are making noises of a similar nature.

A new and more serious threat has arisen. A major split between two factions of the 1976 Carnival Development Committee threatens to ruin the 1977 celebrations. The Carnival Development Committee is that body which is responsible for the yearly organisation of the event.

The conflict is by no means a private affair, conducted behind closed doors. The national and local press have carried reports of the split. The *West Indian World* published a three part serial outlining, in great detail, the history and background to the present situation. News items and radio interviews have alerted the West Indian community that the organisation of our major cultural festival is in disarray.

The obvious consequence of such an open break between factions is the fact that the traditional enemies of carnival are poised to exploit the division in order to destroy the event. In another sense, the split makes it possible for the carnival movement to put its house in order.

Over a period of three years the festival has grown by leaps and bounds. There is no single cultural event in the United Kingdom which draws such a large gathering. One quarter of a million people, from all over the country, attended last year's celebrations. The tasks involved in organising such a festival are bound to be immense and much more so when those tasks are complicated by attacks from without, as was the case in 1976.

The chief culprits in this respect were those senior police officers who were responsible for policing last year's festival. From a force of 60 officers in 1975, they increased the numbers to 1,200 police officers. The inevitable clash took place, when young blacks fought a running battle with the police for close to four hours. It was, to quote one of the national newspapers, "one of the worst riots in London for 25 years". Reports of the battle were relayed on television screens throughout the world.

With the eyes of the world focussed on the celebrations, the carnival festival assumed political implications way beyond the wildest dreams of its organisers.

Predictably, with the political implications, have come a rag-bag of opportunists. And with a quarter of a million people concentrated in Notting Hill, so too have the hustlers homed in, each looking for his fortune.

The upshot of all this is the emergence of two distinct and separate committees, each claiming to be organisers for 1977; the Notting Hill Carnival Committee and the Carnival Development Committee. All efforts at bringing both factions together have failed. The editor of *West Indian World* offered his services as mediator, only to be told by one faction that it was not on.

So long as the police, local residents and the council authorities were keeping up the constant attack on the carnival, all matters relating to how the festival should be organised, and by whom, were

"Now that the threat of outside intervention has been pushed back, we are faced with ourselves, and those issues which have remained in abeyance. What is the carnival? What are the tasks facing the carnival committee in 1977?"

"How is that organisation to be brought into being? From a rag-bag of political opportunists and hustlers? From a paid group of professional impressarios? From a meeting organised by Notting Hill community projects at which a populist election takes place and at which any passer-by is able to vote? No, in every case! A thousand times no!"

Calling all Notting Hill Residents!

NOTTING HILL CARNIVAL
IS
YOUR CARNIVAL
BE AT THIS MEETING

A PUBLIC MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE AT ACKLAM HALL, ACKLAM ROAD, LONDON W.10 ON TUESDAY 25th JANUARY AT 6.00 PM TO ELECT THE MEMBERS OF THE 1977 NOTTING HILL CARNIVAL MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE. YOUR VOTE IS IMPORTANT: TRY AND BE EARLY.

A number of opportunists and uncle toms are trying deliberately to take control of Notting Hill Carnival - for their own ends:

THIS IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH

We should not forget that during 1976 Carnival:

1. hundreds of innocent men, women and children were brutally beaten;
2. many poor stall holders suffered huge losses;
3. several police officers were injured

and that once again Black People have been given a bad name.

MR. SELWYN BAPTISTE, THE MAN IN CHARGE OF CARNIVAL '76, HAS REFUSED TO TAKE POSITIVE ACTION IN THIS MATTER.

+ NO MORE RIOTS PLEASE!

SINCE THE END OF CARNIVAL 1976 MR. BAPTISTE HAS NOT:

1. HELD A MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING;
2. CALLED A PUBLIC MEETING;
3. USED THE CARNIVAL OFFICE;
4. TRIED TO COMPENSATE THOSE POOR STALL HOLDERS;
5. ADVERTISED FOR THE HOLDING OF PUBLIC ELECTIONS TO GIVE THE PEOPLE OF THIS AREA AN OPPORTUNITY TO ELECT THE PEOPLE OF THEIR CHOICE.

BUT

Judging from the Local and National Press Reports Mr. Baptiste has been:

(a) holding private meetings with the police and others;
(b) staging Press Conferences to get publicity;
(c) having secret engagements with crooked officials;
(d) lying to the press - right, left and centre and trying to discredit the Treasurer, Secretary and other prominent members of the 1976 Committee.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

Our meeting of 25th January 1977 will decide the destiny of Notting Hill Carnival. We wish to remind you that your vote is important.

.....

Sandwiches, roti, refreshments etc. will be available.

pushed aside. It was simply a question of unity to defeat the outsiders. To a large degree the outsiders have been defeated. Young blacks saw to that.

Now that the threat of outside intervention has been pushed back, we are faced with ourselves, and those issues which have remained in abeyance. What is the carnival? What are the tasks facing the carnival committee in 1977? Neither faction has sought to clarify either question. The issue, as articulated by them, is simply put: "Who Controls the Show".

Last year, some 15 steelbands and their masqueraders paraded the streets in and around the area known as the Grove. The parade remains the central attraction. Beginning in the spring, each band prepares for the day. They are all self-organised entities, all 15 of them. They choose a theme and proceed to design the relevant costumes. Take, for example, the Ebony Steelband. In 1976, their portrayal was titled, 'Things with Wings'. They operated, in the weeks prior to the event, from their 'mas camp', where the costumes are designed and displayed. The potential masquerader selects his/her costume and is fitted out. The organisation of the steelband grows side by side. New pans must be cut, grooved and tuned; old ones touched up. The latest calypsoes from the Trinidad and Tobago festival are arranged and 30 or more musicians practice day in and day out. Original funds come from the pockets of the members themselves, to be supplemented by grants from small Caribbean businessmen, trusts and other foundations. All these transactions are carried out from within the bands themselves. It is, in all cases, a major organisational effort to keep the unit together up to and during the two carnival days.

Sound systems are a recent addition to the carnival. From several points within the area disc jockeys spin out a web of Caribbean sound. The sounds are not specifically organised for the event, in the

same way that the steelbands and their masqueraders are. For them, the carnival is just another event. They, too, build an organisation to keep their show on the road.

The weakest organisational link are the makeshift pop groups which are driven around the streets in open trucks, and these groups are no more than a hurriedly organised body of independent 'gig' musicians.

Carnival has grown only to the extent that these units have developed their organisational capacities from different bases in London. A quarter of a million people are drawn to the area because they are fired by the range of artistic expression on show, a range that is possible only because of a disciplined organisational base.

Difficulties and issues arise which cannot be handled from within a single unit. Some of the smaller steelbands are in need of funds, over and beyond that which they can raise independently. Some masqueraders need subsidies for some of their more elaborate costumes which can cost hundreds of pounds. Difficulties arise from a shortage of space for mas camps and steelband practice sessions Transport and generators for sound systems and pop groups are obstacles which no individual unit can handle on its own. These are all problems of production, simple administrative tasks to be coordinated and organised. By whom? The organisation in charge of the event.

Once the show is ready for the road other issues present themselves. In relation to events of 1976, the major issue has been the question of over-policing and the route to be taken by the steelbands. These are serious political questions. The Metropolitan police have indicated that they want us off the streets, and failing that, then, we are to be ushered on a route chosen by them. To enforce the latter and to lay the basis for the former, they chose, in 1976, to flood the area with policemen. These are not matters for individual bands and sound systems. They can only be dealt with, by whom? The organisation in charge of the event, with a clear policy for winning a low police profile, retaining the celebration on the streets, and along a route that is convenient and proper for ourselves. For this, there must be a clear strategy for winning what we want.

And finally, the crowds, the quarter of a million who make their way to the Grove, some to hear 'sweet pan', some to follow their favourite sound system, others to take in the rich variety of costumes. To date, there has been little serious work in this respect. Areas for viewing have never been clearly worked out, discos have sprouted haphazardly, different folks, who have come to the celebrations to see and participate in particular events, have been thrown together haphazardly, with little care for the amenities they need – toilets etc. Again, no single group can be responsible for this area. It has to be organised. By whom? The organisation responsible for the event.

Now that we have described the organisational basis of carnival and the tasks to be carried out by any organisation in charge of the event, only one question must we answer. How is that organisation to be brought into being? From a rag-bag of political opportunists and hustlers? From a paid group of professional impressarios? From a meeting organised by Notting Hill community projects at which a populist election takes place and at which any passer-by is able to vote? No, in every case! A thousand times no!

Only an organisation directly and intimately representative of the different organised units will suffice. Any other form and we are heading for trouble. Any other form and we are bound to be plagued with those problems that have subverted the smooth running of the event to date.

Within the very womb of carnival itself, the organisers of the steelbands, of the mas camps, of the sound systems have shown, have demonstrated their organisational talents. It is a source waiting to be tapped. Only they, those with a direct interest in the event itself, are capable of taking the organisation of the event to a higher and qualitatively different stage. Only the manoeuvrings of political opportunists and hustlers stand in their way.

On both committees there are those who have grown up on the hard terrain of building a particular unit from scratch. It is for them to get together now. The task is to mobilise the autonomous units for the consolidation of the carnival movement into a solid organisation. They will invite individuals and community groups to join them, within clearly defined principles of organisation. But the leadership is theirs and this is the moment for grabbing hold of the reins. It is for that organisational base to step forward and bring order to the disarray in which we find ourselves. Seize the time.

WHAT WE SAID TO THE CARNIVAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE IN 1976.

As an alternative we propose the following. It is your responsibility to present to us, your public, a full report on the history of negotiations you entered into, from January 1976 to date; whom you met, when you met them and what was discussed. You have also to tell us the details of your organisation over the two days. A financial statement must accompany such a report. You will present this report to a general meeting of those with a direct interest in the carnival – mas men and women, steelbands men and women, stall holders, local businessmen and women, sounds men and women and interested individuals. The general meeting will consider your report and elect a committee which will be responsible for organising next year's carnival. We emphasise elect, because the leadership of carnival is not a monarchy which is passed on from one elite to the next.

That general meeting and the leadership to emerge from it will form the basis for the fight for carnival on the streets of Notting Hill in 1977. Nothing else will do. We in the Race Today Collective will monitor the developments closely. You either move forward or move on over for others to take your place, others who are prepared to take on the task in hand.

UP AGAINST THE LAWYERS

In the October '76 issue of *Race Today*, the Black Parents Movement rejected the practice which stems from the widely held belief that lawyers know best and that defendants are passive partners in the court scene.

Gavin McKenzie and Ole Hansen, both solicitors, are appalled at the "likely effects" of what the Black Parents Movement advocate. Barrister-At-Law, Ian McDonald, argues the opposite.

We have read your October 1976 issue. The likely effects of the article "How We Organise" appal us.

What are the objects of fighting a criminal case? It is to minimise the damage to the defendants and maximise any political advantage which may be obtained.

Racial oppression is a different and more extreme manifestation of class oppression. The problem as far as professional experts are concerned is that they are part of the oppressing class. That can however be transcended by individuals. In the case of lawyers, this means no collusion with the courts and the police, and attempting to de-mystify the 'legal process' to the defendant.

We challenge the assumption of the Black Parents Movement that there is no such thing as a good solicitor, and the assumption that it is therefore right to dispense with a solicitor's expertise when it is available and replace it with a group of untrained unskilled individuals (who are often as guilty of mystification towards the defendant as the worst lawyer).

The article attempts to give a number of examples of how solicitors work against the interests of their clients and how to prevent this. We believe that we know the meeting which is referred to (the Harlesden case where we represented four out of six defendants) and the version of what happened is distorted to the point of untruthfulness.

In so far as it contains any truth, it shows a lack of understanding of what is involved in the preparation of a case and of the solicitors' role. This is a criticism which applies equally to the rest of the article.

For instance, the article criticises the solicitor for not immediately accepting a barrister who was suggested to him by the defence committee (not the defendants) but it would be obviously irresponsible of a solicitor to choose a barrister without being first satisfied of his or her competence in court.

Another example the article gives is that the defence committee should take their own statements, and only hand them to the solicitor at the last stage when they are "entirely satisfied" with them. But how can a case be planned if its details are not known because the statements are not available? How can cross-examination and speeches be prepared? How can defendants be advised on what is going to happen? How can the advocate advise on which witnesses to call without expert assessment of their strength as witnesses?

Defence committees are very important; if we did not think so we would not have spent time writing this. They can make a tremendous contribution towards the fight in the following ways:

1. Choosing good solicitors for the defendants.
2. Keeping contact with those solicitors, ensuring that they do the work properly, and that there is a flow of information between the defendants, the lawyers and the committee.
3. Finding the witnesses, possibly taking initial statements, but certainly putting them in contact with the solicitors as soon as possible.
4. Raising funds.
5. Motivating the defendants, keeping up morale and if there is more than one defendant, coordinating strategy.
6. Publicity; in particular keeping the newspapers informed and trying to ensure that the court hearings are fully and sympathetically reported.

The defence committees we have worked with have exhibited most of these positive characteristics, but some have also exhibited the negative characteristics exemplified in the article. The effect of this has been to waste the time and energy of the lawyers and the defendants involved and to produce a lack of solidarity, with a consequent weakening of the defence case. This can never be for the benefit of the individual defendant, and though it is a cliche, it is for good reason that the imperialist principle has always been: Divide and Rule.

Ole Hansen
Gavin McKenzie

'MY DISAGREEMENT IS TOTAL AND FUNDAMENTAL'

Ian McDonald

I must take issue with my friend, Gavin McKenzie and his colleague, Ole Hansen, over their criticism of the Black Parents Movement.

They say that the object of fighting a criminal trial is to minimise the damage to the defendant, and then suggest that the way to do this is to find a 'good solicitor' and rely entirely on his or her expertise. These assertions are based on two assumptions. That the defendant is a victim, that is someone who is powerless and essentially passive, and that the professionals know best, or certainly, that they know better than the members of the Black Parents Movement. My disagreement is total and fundamental.

First, the defendant as victim. In the black context it means you see the defendant as black Sambo but never as the rebel, Nat Turner. The self activity of the defendant in the court proceedings

is denied. However great the defendant's rebellion up to the time of arrest, it must stop at the door of the court. Court rooms are places for professionals, and defendants must follow a certain code of behaviour and sit docile and passive in the dock. The 'good' lawyer then bargains with the court about their fate.

Unfortunately, this is probably a correct description of the normal lawyer/client relationship in criminal cases, except that a large number of lawyers are incompetent at carrying out even this relatively simple task. The traditional treatment of the defendant as passive victim has certain clearly defined consequences on how a case is prepared (which Gavin and Ole go into) and on the style of advocacy used in court (which they leave out).

So far as preparation is concerned, solicitors are in sole charge over the client. From the moment they are instructed they tell him or her what to do, what to leave out of statements, often, what to



A SCENE AT THE OLD BAILEY WHERE THE DIALOGUE IS AS RECORDED. THE GESTURE IS HOWEVER, PURELY IMAGINARY

JUDGE EDWARD CLARKE Q.C. "..... WELL, ... ARE YOU GOING TO APOLOGISE, MR McDONALD..... ARE YOU?"

MR IAN McDONALD. "CERTAINLY, MY LORD; WHEN YOUR LORDSHIP APOLOGISES TO ME!"



Drawings and comments by a juror in the Mangrove Trial, 1971.

put in, which witnesses to call, how to dress and how to behave in the court. A 'good' solicitor is one who does these things with care and sympathy, who takes time and trouble, and who knows of any legal loopholes. And there are not too many of these around.

The solicitor's role is reinforced by the advocate. If you see your client as victim, then basically your role is to strike the best bargain you can for him or her with the magistrate or judge. That includes the cases that are 'fought'. Your style of advocacy will be deferential and accommodating. Your success depends on their goodwill and sense of fair play. So you will not press points that might offend. You will leave the substance of the case untouched, but will jump at any technicalities or nice legal points which offer a chance of escape for your client.

In short, this type of case preparation and advocacy accepts the myth of judicial impartiality, and never challenges the power of the court. And all the time it assumes that your client will be sitting there in the dock, dumb and passive, except for his or her brief and often painful sojourn to the witness stand and back.

I accept that there are certain cases where this kind of bargaining process may be the best option open. But in most cases it simply doesn't work. Clearly, something else needs to be done. Some other way has to be found.

Gavin and Ole recognize this. I have no doubts about their care and concern. But what do they propose? A defence committee. Fine. Very radical. But what kind of committee? Essentially, theirs is one which in no way trespasses on the lawyers' territory, but leaves the entire tactics and conduct of the case in their 'expert' hands, and devotes itself to the good works of soothing the troubled victim's brow, finding witnesses, and dealing with the press. And what is the result? The same kind of deferential bootlicking in court, only now you have a few pickets outside. This way you strike a radical pose and change nothing.

This brings me to their second assumption — that the professionals are the experts and know best. The traditional methods of defending court cases do not generally work. There are exceptions. But they certainly do not work in the situation existing between the police and black youth with which we are dealing. Solicitors and barristers may be well-versed in the do's and don't's of the traditional craft. But, by and large, they have no idea what to put in its place, and, by and large, they don't want to know, because they make a lot of easy money doing things in the traditional way. That is the extent of their expertise.

What Gavin and Ole ignore completely is that the people in the Black Parents Movement have not just dropped out of the sky. They come into that organisation with a very particular history and experience of dealing with courts and police, as they will explain. In particular, they have the Mangrove experience. I believe that the Mangrove trial was a watershed, not because I took part in it — I know a lot of things now that I didn't know then — but because we learned, through that experience, how to confront the power of the court and in the end to break it. That was because the defendants refused to play the role of victim and to rely on the so-called expertise of the lawyers, and because they, or some of them, were so organised that they could carry their intentions through.

Once you recognise the defendant as a self-active and self-assertive human being in the court, as well as outside, everything has to change — the power and role of lawyers, the style of advocacy, and the method of case preparation. The lawyer can no longer act as a buffer, mediating between the judge and his or her client. The power confrontation is sharp and direct, and the myth of judicial impartiality fades away.

The main point of the criminal trial is not the lawyer sheltering his or her client from damage. The main question is how strong and powerful you are. That is purely an organisational question of which the Black Parents Movement, I believe, are fully aware. If you are weak you will be annihilated. If you are strong, then the court, like every other state institution, will seek to make some accommodation with you.

What Gavin and Ole and all the other radical lawyers have to decide is whether they want to retain their slice of the traditional lawyers' cake or to participate in a bold new experience.

BOGLE ATTACKED

The Bogle-L'Ouverture bookshop in Ealing was attacked by racist vandals between February 19 and 20, 1977. Below, we reprint extracts from the leaflet left behind by the racists and a press statement issued by the management of the bookshop.

'Are the natives restless in your school? Have they made your halls and school-yards resemble the Congo? Have the bathroom blackbirds made the restrooms unsafe? . . .'

'When was the last time one of your friends was attacked by the banana brigade? When was the last time they tried to proposition one of your girlfriends? . . . '

'The jungle bunnies are organized. As a result, they can exert pressure on the chicken school administrators — and get whatever they want. . . . '

'The time has come for action — not words! For action — contact the National Party.'

PRESS STATEMENT

Bogle-L'Ouverture Bookshop, at the above address, was vandalised between Saturday and Sunday, February 19 and 20, 1977, by individuals with racist sentiments. Obscene racist signs were smeared on the glass windows and doors — NIGGERS OUT — K.K.K. —ENOCH — and WHITE POWER. A leaflet, dropped through the door, contained a whole range of racist abuse and was signed by the National Party. They left their phone number — 486-3697. A member of the Bogle-L'Ouverture management discovered the act of vandalism at about 1.30 pm on Sunday, February 20, 1977. The bookshop was closed on Saturday, February 19, 1977 at 6.15 pm.

We called the local police who have taken statements, we hope, with a view to prosecuting the offenders.

For over five years, Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications has been providing services to libraries, schools, teacher training colleges, curriculum development centres and teachers resource centres throughout Britain. Local education authorities have been increasingly concerned with the need not only to get books we stock into schools and colleges, but also to seek assistance for teachers to use those books in the classrooms.

Bogle-L'Ouverture Bookshop is one of the few bookshops in the country where the black community can find literature and writings from Africa, Afro-America, Asia and the Caribbean.

The bookshop community ought to be made aware of this activity on the part of the National Party because of the dangers it represents to the entire society.

It is for these reasons that we have been attacked by the racists.

Issued February 21, 1977.



THE NATIVES RESTLESS ?

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ELECTIONS IN INDIA: THE BALLOT AND THE BULLET

BY FARRUKH DHONDY



The Indian nation, a population of 600 million people and an electorate of 320 million voters, goes to the polls in March. In calling this snap election, with a formal announcement on January 17, the prime minister, Indira Gandhi, has not restored democracy to India. No election can do that. She has shown, rather, how the machinery of elections, switched on and off selectively, is the weapon in the hands of state power.

For 18 months, the leaders of the opposition, some of whom will stand in this election and some of whom will not, have been in jail. With the election announcement came the release of a selected number of politicians opposed to Indira's regime. Other popular leaders, such as Jyoti Basu of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and Madhu Limaye, together with junior cadres of the fascist and the 'revolutionist' parties remain inside.

In hustling India to the polls and releasing a selection of political prisoners, Indira Gandhi has caused the fragmented opposition parties to unite. She has also caused a large section of the Congress bosses of her own party, most notable amongst them, former food minister, Jagjivan Ram, to defect to the united opposition. Four parties which held small blocks of seats in the central legislature and in the states have formed themselves into the Janata (people's) Front and are in the process of working out a strategy through which each of the 542 Congress candidates for parliamentary seats will be faced with only one opponent — their slogan, Democracy or Dictatorship.

The Jan Sangh, the chief partner, is a right wing Hindu Party with pseudo-fascist tactics of mobilising the lower middle classes to ideals and morals of Hindu nationalism. The Bharatiya Kranti Dal is the smoked-out butt of an American-style free enterprise party relying on the support of Chambers of Commerce and trying to win the loyalties of the boss landlords of rural India. The Congress (O) is itself the rump of the Congress party of Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru. They were left behind when, in '69, Indira carried the majority of the Congress organisation with her to form the Ruling Congress. The Indira faction was dedicated to the nationalisation of the banks, the amendment of the constitution, and the abolition of the power of bossy chief ministers in the states whose corruption and gangsterism were so discredited that even Indira emerged as the symbol of purity and socialism at the time. The fourth partner in the new coalition, the Socialist Party of India, lost one of its most charismatic figures in George Fernandes, labour leader of Maharashtra and veteran of the Railway strike, who resigned from the Party when it agreed to join its ideological enemies.

SECURING THE VOTES

The Janata Front has made a pact with Jagjivan Ram's new Congress for Democracy, which has been joined by other defectors, including the chief ministers of Orissa, of Bihar and of the new state of Sikkim in the Himalayas, and by Indira Gandhi's aunt, Mrs Vijayalakshmi Pandit, sister of Jawaharlal Nehru. Ram's defection, after faithful service to the party of Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru, and a career which held its share of responsibility in the emergency and its share of scandal and corruption, should carry with it the vote of 80 million 'untouchables' whose leader he is supposed to be. When Ram appeared in Delhi for his first public meeting, together with Jayaprakash Narayan, the leader whose initial popular movement in '75 and '76 led to the imposition of the emergency, a quarter of a million people turned up to listen.

A crowd in Delhi is never a measure of political support, as the rally held by Indira the previous day, with 100,000 attenders, indicated. Reports say that as the prime minister began to speak, the workers who had been released with full pay from their jobs in the bureaucracies of the capital, began drifting away and chanting slogans demanding overtime for being there. The police stopped them leaving.

In all the electoral alliances, even in the accommodation that the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has made with the Janata Front, there is not the glimmer of a programme or promise for the Indian electorate to hold on to. The new alliances do not present the country with a choice of direction in life, only with a choice of people to run state power. In the coming days, there are bound to be more defections from the Congress, more instant conversions to 'democracy', as Indira's party machine decrees which of the old parliamentarians will lose their seats in favour of the strong youth section of the party, the Youth Congress, led by Indira's 31-year old son Sanjay.

The Western Press has greeted Indira's election move as a step towards restoring the suspended freedoms of 'the greatest democracy in the world'. Yet, this 'free' election is not the sort that is held in the heartlands of capitalist democracy. Censorship still operates. The structures of secret and auxilliary policing, set up before and during the emergency, will ensure that the opposition party gets no funds from the business houses, as these have to declare all contributions to political groups. Those who donate will meet with the inevitable reprisals from the Congress whose bosses use Air Force transport to get around in the campaign, and are well-stocked with the 'contributions' that every business man and rich farmer has to make to stay solvent.

The crowds of Delhi or of Bombay and Calcutta are in a sense free voters, even though these urban workers are subject to the political dictates of their different party unions, and to violence and intimidation from the controllers of the unions and the controllers of slum districts.

The electors of the rural districts, where 75% of the Indian electorate lives and works, are not free voters in any sense. In these constituencies, the Congress machine is extremely powerful. Here, votes are controlled by those who own land, or supply credit, or farming facilities, or agricultural jobs. In







the villages, the Congress Party has built a firm structure of a landlord class, strengthened by measures such as the nationalisation of Indian banks which now lend their money to rich and middle farmers. Alongside the landlords stand local bosses who command the civil servants and the police force which terrorises peasants, agricultural labourers and sharecroppers in favour of the landlords. Threats of unemployment, forcible foreclosure of debts and instant beggary through 'legal' eviction from small plots of land are all weapons in the system of coercion.

In the last three years, this structure of Congress control has been built up while the party organisations of the opposition have been systematically dismantled by the simple device of banning their propaganda, buying their activists and jailing those who won't be bought for the price. And during this time, the prime minister's son, Sanjay Gandhi, has built for himself a party within the party, pulling the youth of the towns and large villages into the Youth Congress. This is an all-India body which has become a sort of big time national peace corps and a small time mafia – deployed to break up strikes, smash opposition party meetings and officers and manifest open gun-play against Marxist party-wallahs on the campuses and in the chawls (the urban slums).

THE POWER OF SANJAY

The Youth Congress is Sanjay's power base, even though he has never been elected as its legitimate leader. Its activists dominate the party conferences, travelling free on the railways, eating at the party's expense and becoming local gang bosses through their closeness to police and official power. As a party within the party, Sanjay's mob will inevitably make a bid for the occupation of a large number of Congress seats, taking Sanjay into parliament as a party leader of unchallengeable status.

Apart from being the Youth Congress' man of destiny, Sanjay heads the corporation given a government licence to make the 'people's car' with a mixture of free enterprise and state money. Scandal has surrounded his financial and political rise to the position of heir apparent to the Indian throne. The defections of Ram and of Nandini Satpathy, the Chief Minister of Orissa, and of other Congress leaders who are threatened with losing their parliamentary seats to Sanjay's young bloods, have now shaken the organisational base of the party.

In the Congress election manifesto, Sanjay's programme for the regeneration of the country is mentioned only once. The points of this programme, which asks the people to plant seeds and not sperm, to teach others to read etc., have managed to build the Youth Congress, but are hardly the points which win elections. The programme can be now seen for what it is: a deliberately inane disguise for the economics and politics that Sanjay, as a dynastic influence on his mother, brings to the Congress state.

Under his guidance and insistence, the cover of the emergency has been used to liberate the forces of international capital in India. Foreign companies have been encouraged to invest money and reap new profits from the labour of the Indian masses, after assurances in law that the new mood of 'discipline' would forbid strikes, bonus payments to workers, or any increases in the subsistence wage.

The presence of Sanjay is symbolic of the realisation in the Congress Party that the economic and political cold war, between the capital and power of the international monopolies on the one hand, and the Soviet Union on the other, is dead. A new profit-making treaty must be worked out as the hatchet is buried in India, in Angola and Rhodesia, in Jamaica and the other shared empires of the third world.

The money and machines supplied by the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (the national debt to these countries has reached its highest point this year) have been used by the Indian state to build the basic and heavy industries which supply the power, transport and minerals used by the private sector of the Indian economy. The private sector imports international monopoly capital and exports profits and raw materials to Europe, Japan and and the Soviet block, and finished or assembled goods to the rest of Asia and to parts of Africa.

The precondition for the treaty between East and West is the complete defeat of the independent (undirected by the nationalism of India or China or the USSR) movement of the workers and peasants of these areas of the third world, movements which have defied the emergency regimes of Bangladesh, of Pakistan, of Jamaica, of South Africa, of Portugal and of India.

THE WORKERS AND PEASANTS FIGHT BACK

Throughout the period of this emergency, a euphemism for the state's military involvement in the class struggle, the urban and industrial workers of India, a force of 18 million people, have managed to defeat the government's bonus regulation which starves them of a twelfth of their yearly income.

In the rural districts of Maharshtra, Punjab, Andhra and West Bengal, there have been militant peasant uprisings against the power of landlords. Under the surface of calm that the emergency attempted to create (Western reporters still write of trains running on time) the riotous dissatisfactions of the masses, allied to the new organisations of the impoverished urban intellectuals, has caused the Congress regime acute anxiety.

Apart from the bonus regulation, the emergency brought in the practice of compulsory sterilisation of prisoners, the very poor, of muslim sections of the community and brought with it the powerful reaction of the masses. In the manifesto which the Congress now puts before the people, there is a significant acknowledgement of the power of that dissent. The manifesto declares that forcible sterilisation, which was to become law in four states of the union this year, has been shelved. Family planning, it says, will be carried out through education and improved facilities for those families who restrict their growth to two children.

The nettle of the forcible elimination of the growth of sections of the population was too prickly for even the emergent dictatorship to grasp.

The strikes and riots over the bonus issue and over compulsory sterilisation surfaced in '76, in spite of the complicity of the unions in the government strategy and the massive police presence to enforce scrotal surgery. No opposition political party, no trade union organisation has succeeded in turning this mass movement into a mass organisation dedicated to the capture of power.

Since the '74 Railway Strike was defeated by a government military operation, the masses of India have sought a vehicle for their power and material advance. The movement led by Jayaprakash Narayan (the JP movement as it is still called) brought together millions of people under a banner of opposition to the corruption which is another word for parliamentary rule in India. The repression of this movement, the jailing of its leaders, and now their release, has channelled its energies into the ballot box – an acknowledgement of defeat by its leaders on the extra-parliamentary battle-field.

The remnants of this movement, trading now on the sacrifice of imprisonment that the leaders made, has now presented itself as part of the Janata Front for slaughter at the polls. If Indira wins the election, which seems likely because of the total inability of a rag-bag of laissez faire capitalists, ex-maharajahs, minority trade union leaders and ex-Congress equivalents of Mayor Daley to present the electorate with a plausible government, she will have eliminated, once and for all, the political party as a rallying organisation for historical change in India.

In spite of all the claims put forward for it in government propaganda and in the foreign press, the Indian emergency did not attain the economic objectives that its 'new discipline' was designed to fulfil. The inflation rate is currently 11%. The bumper harvest of 118 million tons in the summer season of '76 was followed by a relative failure of the winter crop. The last months have brought spiralling prices in grain and essential foodstuffs. The government's strategy of buying grain wholesale and selling it at controlled prices has also failed as the buying price is set by the farmers and middle men, who use government-loaned public money to price grain out of the range of the poor family's pocket.

The productive targets set by the emergency have not been reached either. In spite of all the moves against shop-floor action, the spate of strikes and the sheer reluctance of the industrial proletariat to sweat for the profit of others, has kept the growth rate to below 4%, defeating government strategy to tackle inflation.

In West Bengal, the sharecroppers' uprising has resulted in the murder of several people by landlords and police. The croppers put up a fight when the 'jotedars' refused to let them have the share of the crop they had worked for. The opposition in Bengal has called for a government enquiry into the police murders. In the climate of the election there will be no enquiry.

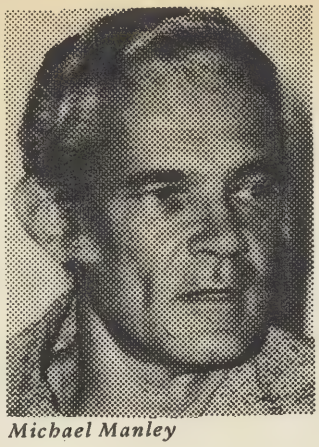
Such are the indications in election year, of the disquiet of a population which will not be satisfied by a choice between 'democracy and dictatorship'. No election result, for Indira or for her tattered opposition, can deal with the revolt that inspires the mass movement. In contesting the elections, the parties, including the vanguard communists, have called upon the people to vote them into the power that Indira would have to vacate, rather than fight for themselves and the betterment of their material conditions.



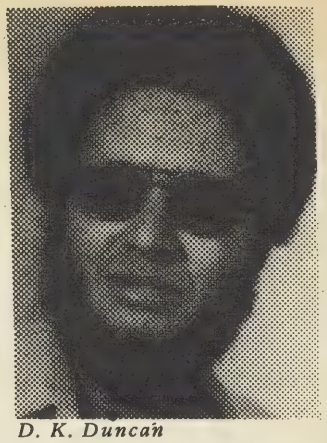


CARIBBEAN NOTES

MANLEY IN THE SADDLE



Michael Manley



D. K. Duncan

Following the December 15 elections in Jamaica, Richard Hart addressed an audience at the West Indian Student Centre on the voting patterns and the composition of the new government.

Friends, I'm to speak on the situation in Jamaica and, I think, I can assume general knowledge of the election statistics and so confine what I have to say on that to just a few short moments.

The Peoples National Party (PNP), as you know, had a very substantial victory in February and December 1972 but the actual swing in the overall vote in the December 15 election was relatively small. It increased from approximately 56% of the votes cast in '72 to 56.8% on this occasion. But what is significant are some shifts in class allegiances within the overall total. And to illustrate this, the PNP, in 1972, in greater Kingston, got 53% of its votes from areas that have been classified in the organ of the Workers Liberation League — *Struggle* — as working class areas. How precise and how exactly accurate these classifications are I can't say, but presumably, it is generally indicative of the nature of the area. They got 53% of their votes in '72 from working class areas and 30% of their votes from middle class areas, in Greater Kingston. Now, this time round, they got 63% of their votes from working class areas and 23% of their votes from middle class areas. So that shows an increase in the votes from working class areas and a decline in the votes from the middle class areas.

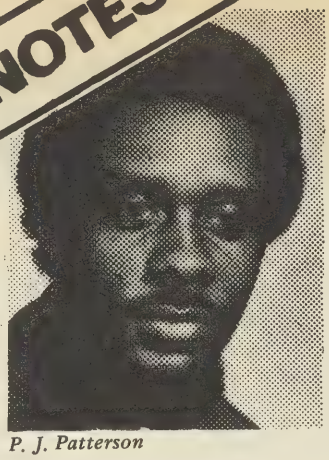
Let's look at the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP) in the same areas. In '72 the JLP got 67% of its votes in working class areas and 12% in middle class areas. On this occasion the JLP got 51% of its votes in the working class areas and 45% of its votes in the middle class areas. Now, I don't say that these are accurate but I do think they are sufficiently indicative of the trend that took place, this shift in class allegiances.

In the rural constituencies outside of Kingston and its suburbs, the shift again in the total overall vote is fairly slight. The PNP, in '72, got 55.6% of the vote and on this occasion they got 55%. A small decline, but here again there were some significant shifts. And there are two areas I would like to mention, areas where the sugar lands have been developed along cooperative lines — the land being given to the former sugar workers to work cooperatively. The PNP had suffered something of a decline between 1972 and the local elections in 1974. But in Western Westmoreland and South Clarendon, as between '72 and '74, there was a swing to the PNP of 7% and 12% respectively. So within the overall totals which changed very little there were some significant class realignments.

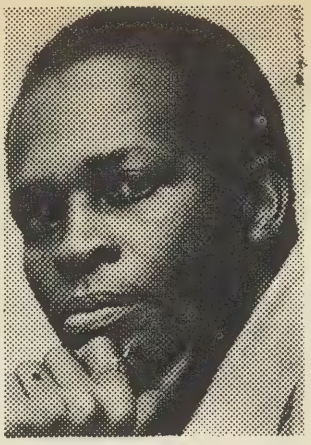
Now, I would like to do a bit of counting of heads to give you an idea of the composition of the PNP's parliamentary party, the council of ministers and the cabinet. In '72, the overwhelming composition of the PNP members in the legislature was conservative. One could only speak of one left wing person and perhaps one maverick left wing individual. The cabinet, as far as I could assess, contained only one person who could be said to represent the leftist trend in the party and that was the Minister of Housing, Tony Spaulding. On this occasion, the most optimistic assessment I have received suggests that the left trend is represented by about 11 or 12 members in the council of ministers which is a new body consisting of 40 people. And in the cabinet, which numbers 20 approximately, about four could be similarly described. So here again, despite the increased representation of the left trend, the composition in the government, in terms of numbers, still reflects, overwhelmingly, the more conservative trend in the party. So one must not be misled by the international propaganda as if this has been a socialist triumph. In composition, the facts show that this is not so.

Assessments of the situation which I have received in letters from home are very optimistic. I will read you what one man on the spot has to say. It is good to know what people are thinking.

He says: "On the surface the left wingers are greatly outnumbered. Of the 20 cabinet ministers there are only Tony Spaulding at Housing, Hugh Small of Youth and Sport and Duncan at National Mobilisation to be counted. But they have quite good ministries." He goes on to deal with the parliamentary secretaries and the members of the council of ministers and the senators giving the details which more or less add up to the figures I have given you. Then he says: "Patterson has the full support of the right wing but as you may imagine the left wing is well on top at the moment. At the swearing in ceremony yesterday, Spaulding got a good reception when he went forward while Patterson was received in silence. Duncan and Spaulding are the strongest. Tony for



P. J. Patterson



Anthony Spaulding



Hugh Small

building houses and Duncan for organising the campaign. But of course Michael is very much at the top. So far he has been pushing things along and working very well with the left wing but as you may imagine the right wing is not as happy as might be with the overwhelming victory. But the position is that the left is very strong at the moment and the bogies about communism have been effectively dealt with."

Another optimistic view which has been expressed is that when some of the older ministers, survivors from previous PNP governments, retire, there should be a further strengthening of the representation of the left trend in the party.

So that, as I say, is a very optimistic assessment of the situation but, taken at its best, assessed however you like, count however you wish, the fact of the matter is, as in '72, so after '76, the progressive nature of the government very much depends on the progressive nature of the prime minister. And the situation is that he is dominant. Many members depend upon his popularity for their survival as members and for that reason he has little difficulty in carrying even the more conservative-minded members along with his progressive policies. He can get his way. And I think the very shift in the leadership of the right wing of the party to Patterson is indicative of the fact that the right must use a totally different strategy from confrontation with the prime minister. You will remember the pathetic effort at confrontation which ended in the defeat of Alan Isaacs who thought he could force a confrontation and failed miserably. Patterson is a much smoother product. He will not openly oppose the prime minister.

One other thing I would like to say on the elections and that is that those of you who read the pamphlet that I wrote — *A Challenge from the Right* — will see that I have suggested that in order to reverse the political trend in Jamaica the reactionaries were working their way through a series of options, a series of possibilities. I said that with the failure of all the possibilites that they had tried, designed to divert the government from the policies they disapproved of, they would find themselves, as the elections approached, facing the decision of whether or not to attempt to organise a coup, and that the neccessity of facing that decision would arise either when the JLP lost the elections or, when it became absolutely obvious to the JLP's reactionary backers that they were going to, they would have to take the decision. Now, my view, and this is my personal assessment and I would like to hear what others think of it, is that they have made that decision. They assessed the situation and came to the conclusion that to attempt a coup was something which was impracticable in the circumstances and is still impracticable. They were not sure that they could count on a sufficient proportion of the armed forces, particularly the police. They saw the probability of failure in the event of an attempt, and that therefore the Americans, in particular the CIA, were making quite sure that no rash element, such as represented by the ex-army officer Whittingham in the JLP, would have the opportunity to try an actual coup. And this is the only explanation I can conceive as to why the supply of automatic weapons which came into Jamaica was not considerably greater. In fact the amount of automatic weapons available for the destabilisation process surprised some people in the PNP. They were surprised that these weapons were not in far greater quantity. And I think that the fact that the JLP destabilisation gangs had to rely so heavily on machine guns and weapons 'stolen' from the army is an indication that the CIA had come to the conclusion (or perhaps, as Philip Agee has suggested, there was a coordinating committee in which the CIA was just one of the people under Kissinger) that it was best not to allow rash elements to attempt a coup because that might in fact cause a greater set back to the reactionaries by forcing the government further to the left. So I think the reactionary forces, the big local and foreign financial interests and the Americans want to go through a further period of endeavouring to halt the trend without attempting a coup.

Coming back then to my main theme, it seems to me that the nature of Manley as a politician, the nature of his thoughts, and his programmes are still, at this stage in Jamaica, all important. It is what Michael Manley, the individual, stands for and how he reacts to the pressures exerted upon him that determines the nature of the government of Jamaica today.

BACKLASH



EAST END AT YOUR FEET: PUPILS' RESPONSE

OUR PROBLEMS

Being one of the people *East End At Your Feet* was written for, I feel I must reply to the unnecessary outcry of criticisms which came from some of the parents. *East End At Your Feet* describes the life of young teenagers in East London today. It illustrates the problems of British and Asian teenagers growing up together; the problems of school, parents, boys and sex, along with with all the clashes and changes teenagers are confronted with.

A vast majority of teenagers come across these problems, and sex, drugs, violence and bad language are nothing new to them. But teenagers have to realise that these things *do* exist and a few lines of bad language will not effect our behaviour in any way.

Nevertheless, the parents may be affected by this somewhat trivial bad language, but I'm sure they know they exist as well as we do.

The story, 'Dear Manju', illustrates the restricted life of Asian girls and the way in which they are not allowed to

East End at Your Feet

Dear Editor

I found this book one of the most interesting books that I have read, because it is based on what is happening in this day and age and is language that I understand. My favourite story in the book is Pushy's Pimples. It describes the feelings of the young west-Indians that have imigrated over to our country.

Through this book I think that we English kids can understand what Indians have to go through because of our unkindness to them. The book tells us also about their religion and way of life.

Helen Merritt

age 15

leave the house without being accompanied by a brother.

As a whole, this book teaches young teenagers about how to cope with their problems. It is humorous and realistic.

Megan,
Aged 14.

MR DHONDY DOES IT EXTREMELY WELL

The stories in *East End At Your Feet* are animated, witty stories about growing up in a city. The fact that most of the teenagers are Asians makes the book no more or less interesting to the average reader. It is unfortunate that the National Front reaction has shifted attention from the book's literary merit to the notoriety of 'some' of the language used.

As a teacher, what appeals to me most strongly is the writer's insight into the emotions of youngsters as they attempt to come to terms with the varying demands of society. Parallels are dubious, but the concern of one of the characters with his sister's behaviour is very little different from any other lad's concern over a member of his family mixing with, say 'goyim' or catholics.

Farrukh Dhondy does not provoke a sentimental response from the reader. We are not asked to feel pity for lads of any culture, but rather to deplore the confusing values and barren preoccupations with which kids are faced. Is this what the National Front really dislike about both ?

Or do they find it offensive that the Asian teenagers described are just as intelligent, just as emotionally aware, just as 'interesting' as their white counterparts? They are very strong characters, who respond thoughtfully to their problems, but then, so are the white adolescents who appear in the book.

Possibly, what distressed the lady who complained was the implication that her daughter is one of the 'slow reluctant readers' for whom the book is intended?

However, the book is not simple. The clarity of the writer's expression arises from his understanding of the subject, rather than from a simplistic structure. The language cannot be separate from the ideas and attitudes expressed. The writer's style does not differ when speaking from the heart rather than the head. Mr Dhondy does not use stock phrases or descriptions to make the reader produce a typical character stored in his brain, but his total understanding creates personalities which have vivacity and depth. This arises from the writer's talent, not from the 'novelty' of background. Perhaps this is what infuriates the National Front; Mr Dhondy, an Asian, writing about Asians, has the audacity to do it extremely well.

Anthea Poole

MY FRIENDS AND I . . .

My friends and I have read *East End At Your Feet* and we think it is a very interesting and unusual book.

All of us think that the best story of all of the six stories was 'Dear Manju'. We thought it was the best story because it shows that sometimes your younger brother could look after you and it is not always the big ones look after the younger ones.

The book also tells the truth about the blacks and the whites. In most other story books they hardly put any blacks in any of there chapters. All they have is about whites. Only, this man, Mr Dundee, plucked up his courage and his bravery and write the book about blacks and whites.

My friends and I thought it was very very nice and we enjoyed it very much.

Monica, Jackie, Joy,
Jennifer and Judy,
All aged 12.

Caribbean Dialogue

A MONTHLY INFORMATION SERVICE

The latest issue is now out.

Major feature:
State Repression and Political Prisoners in the Caribbean.

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DREAD FRED INTERVIEWS LINTON KWESI JOHNSON

From 70 applicants, the Greater London Arts Council and the Lambeth Amenities Services awarded the Cecil Day Lewis fellowship to Linton Kwesi Johnson, the Jamaican born poet and literary critic.

The award invites Linton to be the writer in residence, for the next nine months, in the borough of Lambeth, where he will be working from the Brixton library to encourage artistic expression in the community.

What is it that you're supposed to do as a writer in residence in the borough of Lambeth?

It's fairly flexible. The writer is given a great deal of initiative to organise his own activities. I have been giving a number of talks locally on those topics in which I'm particularly interested. Jamaican music, Caribbean art and literature, the black theatre in Britain and so on. I'm working at setting up poetry and drama workshops at local centres in the borough. I shall be addressing a group of teachers who are members of the National Association of Multi-Racial Education next week, that kind of thing.

The fellowship stipulates that I work a two day week and there's not a great deal you can do in two days of every week. I have to pursue my own work at the same time because I have a family to support. I receive £2,000 for the fellowship, paid in installments. I still have to earn more money because I can't live on £2,000 for nine months with a wife and three children to support. But given the amount of time I have, there is an opportunity, at least, to try and stimulate interest in various artistic forms of expression, especially among black youths. You'd be quite surprised at the number of talented youths who are seeking, at the moment, to find ways of expressing themselves. I'm hoping that I would be able to help these youths I will be working with.

What are the precise areas in which you will be assisting young people in Lambeth?

Poetry and drama, and it is not really a matter of helping but stimulating a kind of atmosphere amongst young people themselves and they'll take it from there. In the field of poetry I have my own work which I can use, and there are lots of other works written by young people all over the country. You can't really teach people to write poetry or teach people to write and produce plays. All you can do is give them what you have, which stimulates them to do things themselves. For example, I take my tape recorder down to the local youth centre and hold sessions in which we, the youth and I, compose poetry, usually in rhyme – the same kind of poetry that the reggae DJ's express. It works well. Some of the material is excellent, but in terms of publication, that kind of poetry is best when it's heard rather than when it's printed. I think it would be good if there were people around who were prepared to put up some money to finance records or cassettes of this type of poetic expression.

What sort of programmes are you planning for the next nine months in the area of Jamaican music?

I'm planning to work around particular areas of Jamaican music and give some public talks on the subject, for example, the poetry of Jamaican music. Another aspect I'd like to deal with is the internationalisation of Jamaican music, the way it has changed, the way it has been revolutionised by the external markets.

Since Bob Marley and the Wailers made the LP, *Catch a Fire*, what has happened is that a whole new style of Jamaican music has come into being. It has a different character, it's a different sound. It's a kind of sound that isn't so much rooted in local feelings and tensions; it's a kind of sound that transcends social/historical conditioning, a more impersonal kind of reggae. Of course, this has been the natural consequence of the intervention by companies such as Island and Virgin who sell the music to a wide market; to English people in Brixton, people in America, people in Nigeria. I can understand this because it's very difficult to see how someone who was born in this country, even blacks born in this country, can relate to the violence, power and tension in Jamaican music, because it's the kind of experience which is alien to them.

Reggae is the most essential expression of the Jamaican reality. It has a national character. But the market situation alters and so the music is also altered.Then, it's no longer reggae music, it's no longer a national music, it becomes an international music. Mind you, the objective conditions for this process were established when West Indians came to this country and went to North America. A kind of Caribbean/Jamaican sub-culture arose. With the interaction of the West Indian population with the English population here, the latter, of course, developed an interest in Caribbean music. This is one area which I am hoping to deal with in the next nine months.

How and when did you begin writing?

In the late 60's and early 70's I was a member of an organisation called the Black Panther Movement. There was a small library of books which members of the organisation could borrow. I picked up this book called *The Souls of Black Folk*, by W E B DuBois, a black American scholar. The book moved me to such an extent that I had to write down a

Continued on page 22.

DOUBLE SCANK

I woz jus about fe move forwud,
tek a walk thru de markit,
an suss de satdey scene —
yu know whey a mean —
when I site bredda Buzza
bappin in style
comin doun FRONT LINE.

him site a likkle sista
him move fe pull a scank
but she soon suss him out
sae him dont in her rank;

soh when shame reach him,
him pap a smile,
scratch him chin,
but de sista coulđda si thru him grin :
bredda Buzza couldn do a single ting.

"Hail, Buzza!" I greet him.
"Love!" him greet I back.
"I a look a money, Buzza;
come forwud wid some dunny."

de bredda sae him bruk
him sae him naw wuk
him sae him woman a breed
him sae him dont even hav a stick a weed.

but I site diffrant :
de bookie man jus done tek him fe a ride!

YOUT REBELS

a bran new breed of blacks
have now emerged,
leadin on the rough scene,
breakin away
takin the day,
sayin to capital neva
movin forwud hevva.

they can only be
new in age
but not in rage,
not needin
the soft and also
shallow councilin
of the soot-brained
sage in chain;
wreckin thin-shelled words
movin always forwud.

young blood
yout rebels :
new shapes
shapin
new patterns
creatin new links
linkin
blood risin surely
carvin a new path,
movin forwud to freedom.

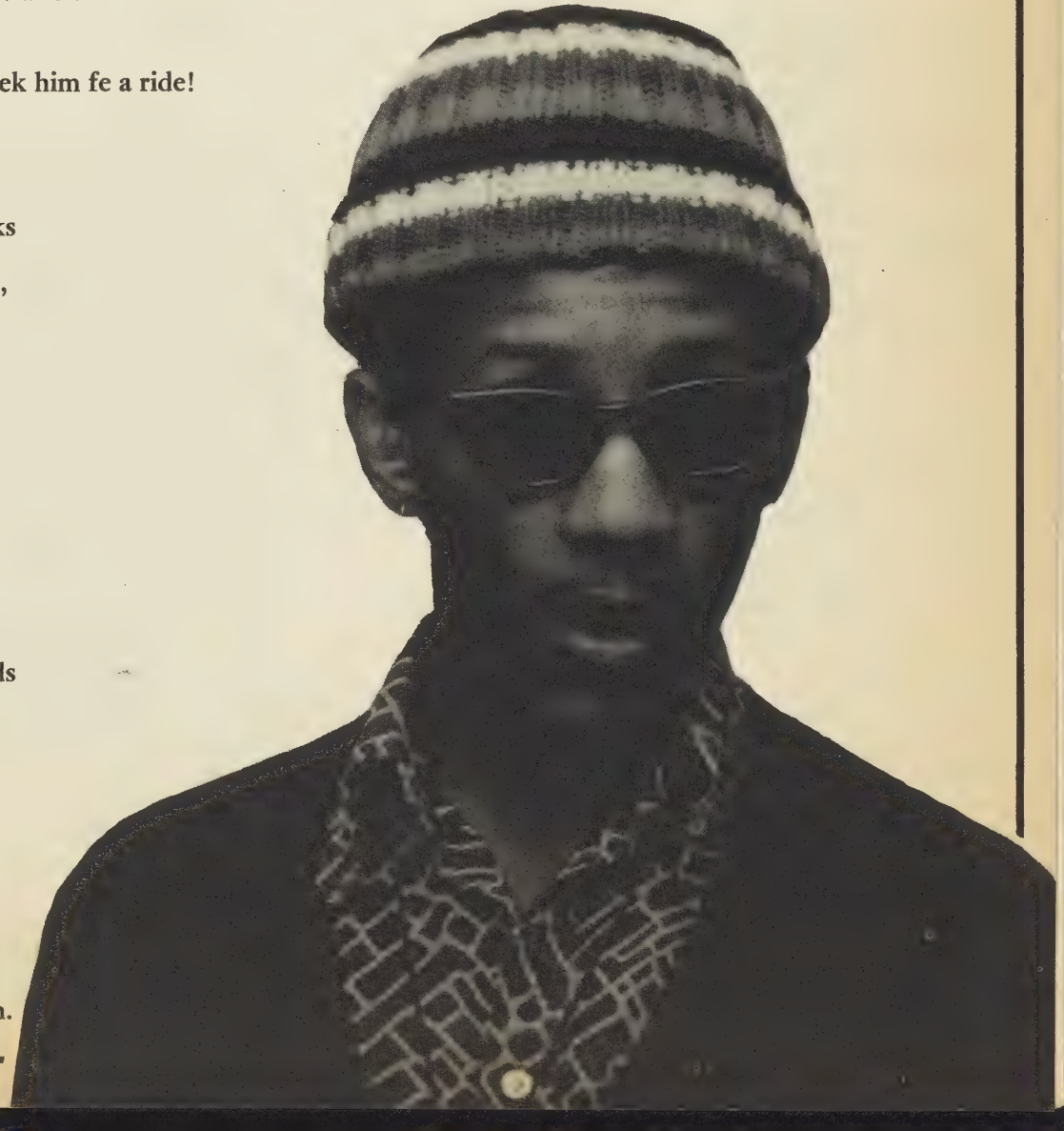
YOUT SCENE

last satdey
I neva dey pan no faam,
so I decide fe tek a walk
doun a BRIXTON,
an see wha gwane.

de bredrin dem stan-up
outside a HIP CITY,
as usual, a look pretty;
dem a laaf big laaf
dem a talk dread talk
dem a shuv and shuffle dem feet,
soaking in de sweet MUSICAL BEAT.

but when nite come
policeman run dem dung;
beat dem dung a grung,
kick dem ass,
sen dem pass justice
to prison walls of gloom

but de bredda dem a scank;
dem naw rab bank;
is packit dem a pick
an is woman dem a lik
an is run dem a run when de WICKED come.



FIVE NIGHTS OF BLEEDING

(For Leroy Harris)

1
madness . . . madness . . .
madness tight on the heads of the rebels;
the bitterness erupts like a hot-blast.
broke glass;
rituals of blood on the burning,
served by a cruel in-fighting;
five nights of horror and of bleeding.
broke glass;
cold blades as sharp as the eyes of hate
and the stabbings.
it's war amongst the rebels:
madness . . . madness . . . war.

2
night number one was in BRIXTON:
SOFRANO B sound system
was a beating out a rhythm with a fire,
coming doun his reggae-reggae wire;
it was a sound shaking doun your spinal column,
a bad music tearing up your flesh;
and the rebels them start a fighting,
the yout them jus turn wild.
it's war amongst the rebels:
madness . . . madness . . . war.

3
night number two doun at SHEPHERD'S
right up RAILTON ROAD;
it was a night named Friday
when everyone was high on brew
or drew a pound or two worth a kally.
sound coming doun NEVILLE KING'S music iron;
the rhythm jus bubbling an back-firing,
raging an rising, then suddenly the music cut:
steel blade drinking blood in darkness.
it's war amongst the rebels:
madness . . . madness . . . war.

4
night number three,
over the river,
right outside the RAINBOW:
inside JAMES BROWN was screaming soul,
outside the rebels were freezing cold;
babylonian tyrants descended,
pounced on the brothers who were bold;
so with a flick
of the wrist,
a jab and a stab,
the song of blades was sounded,
the bile of oppression was vomited,
and two policemen wounded.
righteous righteous war.

5
night number four at a blues dance
a blues dance:
two rooms packed an the pressure pushing up;
hot. hot heads. ritual of blood in a blues dance.
broke glass;
splintering fire, axes, blades, brain — blast;
rebellion rushing doun the wrong road,
storm blowing doun the wrong tree.
and LEROY bleeds near death on the forth night,
in a blues dance,
on a black rebellious night.
it's war amongst the rebels:
madness . . . madness . . . war.

6
night number five at the TELEGRAPH:
vengeance walked through the doors
so slow
so smooth
so tight an ripe an smash!
broke glass;
a bottle finds a head
an the shell of the fire-hurt cracks;
the victim feels fear
finds hands
holds knife
finds throat;
o the stabbings an the bleeding an the blood.
it's war amongst the rebels:
madness . . . madness . . . war.

Continued from page 20.

response to it. It moved me to express myself and that's how I began. In the Panther Youth League, a small group of us would read to each other what we wrote. The kind of thing I wrote was more biblical, because that was my greatest poetic influence at that time, the Bible. In the peasant and proletarian sections of Jamaican society the Bible is probably the only book that you come into contact with. It was my first literary influence. Then I began to read other poets, some of the West African poets. I read Aime Cesaire, Leopold Senghor and Okigbo, and the kind of poetry I wrote was largely influenced by what I was reading at the time. Then I wrote a poem called *Two Sides of Silence* and I began to take part in activities at the Keskidee Centre in North London and in the Caribbean Artists Movement. I found the atmosphere very stimulating. At that time, with some friends, we formed a kind of literary society. We had no experience in these matters so I went to John La Rose, the West Indian publisher, and showed him the kind of things we were writing. He gave me some advice. Later, John and some others were doing a programme on Caribbean culture on the television and he asked me to come and read a poem. After that, all kinds of people asked me to read my poetry at various places. I began to write more and read more until I found a particular style or form in which I was

most comfortable. I would describe that style as part of the oral and musical culture of Jamaica.

From which tradition in Caribbean literature do you draw your inspiration?

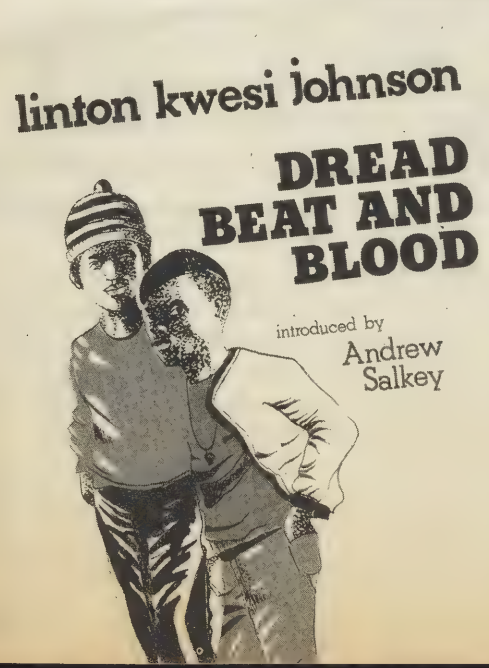
Well, if any thing, I am inspired by the Jamaican oral poets, Big Youth, Jah Stitch and Dillinger. Their lyricism combines both modern and traditional elements. Modern, because it is an integral part of urban Jamaican culture and, at the same time, it is part of a wider oral tradition which has been around much longer.

What are your responses to the works of say Derek Walcott, Eddie Brathwaite and Mervyn Morris?

I have read Walcott's work. I find it difficult at times. He works within the classical tradition. I am close to Brathwaite's work. He combines both the classical with nuances of rhythm and speech which are particular to the Caribbean. The kind of poetry that appeals to me is the kind of poetry that is rich in imagery and sound. Poets like Walcott and Morris do very little for me. They are interesting, that's all.

I am sure that political activists tell you that art should serve the people, that somehow the artist's work should be a form of propaganda. What's your view?

It's more often than not bad art. It is, invariably, bad propaganda as well. If you want to write a political speech, then you should write a political speech. If you want to write a discourse on some social relationship or on production, you do that. Poetry is a means of expressing something less concrete. It's more effective, because it doesn't give you an objective picture of anything. It's too much of an emotional thing. If politics creep into art unconsciously, without the writer trying, that's often the most powerful 'political' expression. But when artists try to be political in their art it usually ends up badly, whether in poetry or in a novel or other art forms. People don't like to be preached at.



DOUN DE ROAD

heavy heavy terror
on the rampage . . .
o dont you worry
it is so near . . .
fratricide is only
the first phase . . .

yes, the violence of the oppressor runnin wild;
them pickin up the yout them fe suss;
powell prophesying a black, a black, a black conquest;
and the National Front is on the rampage
making fire bombs fe burn we.

terror fire terror fire reach we :
such a suffering we suffering
in this burning age of rage;
no place to run to get gun
and the violence damming up inside.

so in the heat
of the anguish
you jus turn :
turn on your brother
an yu lick him
an yu lash him
an stab him
an kill him

and the violence damming up inside.

O that history should take such a rough route,
causing us this bitterness and pain on the way,
is a room full of a fact you cant walk out;

fratricide is only the first phase,
with brother fighting brother stabbing brother :
them jus killing off them one another,

but when you see your brother blood jus flow;
futile fighting; then you know
that the first phase must come to an end
and time for the second phase to show.

Poems by Linton Kwesi Johnson, reprinted from Dread Beat and Blood. Published by Bogle L'Ouverture Publications.

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N.I.S.A.S. – Newham Immigration and Social Advice Service
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If you can possibly help, even only once a month, please contact, Jon Rosser, Newham Rights Centre, Tel: 01-471 8226.

POST–GRADUATE COURSE IN URBAN REGIONAL AND NATIONAL PLANNING

Applications are invited from graduates (and others with relevant work experience) for two year course which emphasises the political economy of planning both in the advanced and underdeveloped countries.

A limited number of SSRC studentships are granted.

Deadline: May 1. (Creche available) Department of Planning, Architectural Association, 35 Bedford Square, London, WC1B 3ES – 01-636 0974.

QUESTIONING DEVELOPMENT

Reprint 1977 of *Questioning Development* by Glyn Roberts.

A pamphlet with notes for volunteers and others concerned with the theory and practice of change.

Price: 40p. Available from: Returned Volunteer Action, 1C Cambridge Terrace, Regents Park, London, NW1 4JL. Tel: 01-935 9447.

AN ACTION HANDBOOK

Third World First, traditionally a 'development organisation', which aims to involve students in radical self-education about and action against injustice and oppression in the third world, is producing a handbook on anti-racist action to be published by next September. The book is intended to be a guide to the possibilities and limitations of effective work by the largely white, largely privileged members of our higher education system, in the spheres of community action, education, employment, immigration legislation, the press and anti-fascist campaigns, for those living in multi-racial and all white areas.

Ideas and experiences of any of the above are particularly needed by March. Please write to: Maggie Wilson, Third World First, 232 Cowley Road, Oxford.

WAGES FOR HOUSEWORK

MARCH 20 IS MOTHER'S DAY. WHEN'S PAY DAY? – *About Time* – A new film by the London Wages for Housework Committee and the Women's Film Group; *Women's music*; *Women Speak-Out.* Refreshments. Admission free. All women welcome. 'We want love and money.'

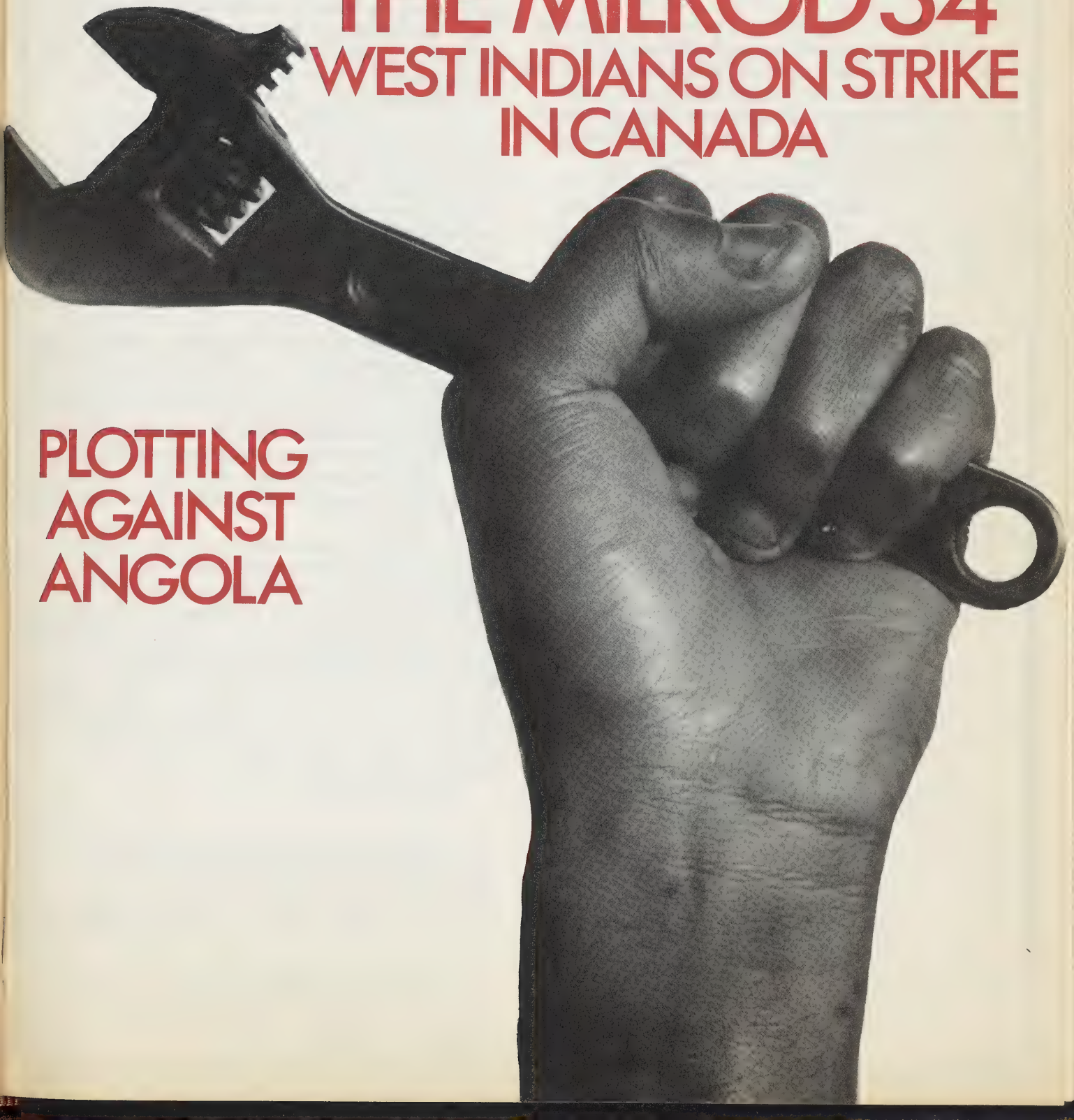
At the Gate Cinema, Notting Hill Gate, London W11. Sunday, March 20. 2–4 pm. (Door open at 1.30 pm) Free childcare provided.

London Wages for Housework Committee
Tel: 01-452 1338 or 01-450 8326.

Race Today

VOICE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY IN BRITAIN MARCH/APRIL 1977 25p

THE MILROD 34
WEST INDIANS ON STRIKE IN CANADA



PLOTTING AGAINST ANGOLA

LETTERS

REMEMBER SOWETO

Dear Race Today,
June 16, 1977 will be the first anniversary of the Soweto demonstrations which were the first of a series of protests by the oppressed black people of South Africa and which continue until today.

Thousands of people have suffered at the hands of the brutal South African repressive forces since then. Hundreds have been shot dead, thousands injured and driven into exile and countless numbers languish in jail.

We, members of the Soweto Students Representative Council Executive Committee, which organised the original demonstration, call upon the progressive peoples of the world to mark this anniversary by demonstrating their solidarity with the oppressed people of South Africa and against all forms of support for the brutal Vorster Apartheid regime.

This appeal is being circulated internationally and has already received the support of a number of prominent people in this country. We would urge you to add your own name or that of your organisation to this list, and join with us in remembering those of our brothers and sisters who fell before the racists' guns at Soweto in the best of possible ways — by stepping up the struggle.

Having obtained a list of prominent figures and organisations to endorse the appeal it will be printed and distributed within the labour movement generally.

Barney Mokgatle,
Former Secretary Soweto Student Representative Council,
African Students Union, Flat 5,
123 Greencroft Road, London, NW6.

AFRICA LIBERATION DAY

Brothers and Sisters,
Revolutionary Greetings:
The world-wide African Revolution is intensifying. The struggle to destroy the last vestiges of European settler colonialism and the new system of neo-colonialism which has taken its place in most areas of the African world has reached a new stage. The masses of African people, and particularly our youth, have once again taken to the streets. They are flooding the guerilla camps which are scattered the length and breadth of the African world, preparing for the inevitable armed struggle for freedom, unity and a better way of life for our people who are scattered and suffering all over the world.

Already, thousands of African youth have been thrown in jail, forced into exile and killed by the governments of South Africa, Rhodesia, South West Africa, Ethiopia and a host of other reactionary, neo-colonial governments. The United States government and other European countries are using every conceivable trick to lull us into believing that they are on our side. They did and said the same things in the late 1950's and early 1960's while they were preparing to invade Vietnam.

In order to explain to the masses of African people the various issues and events which are raging in South Africa and throughout the world, the All African People's Revolutionary Party has launched a world-wide 'Spring Educational and Propoganda Offensive'. The offensive will culminate on Saturday, May 28, 1977, with a series of African Liberation Day demonstrations in Washington D.C., Canada, the Caribbean, Europe and Africa.

The A-APRP is also organising a '2nd National Black Leadership Symposium' which will be held in Washington, D.C. on Friday, May 27, 1977.

We need your help. We are asking you to help us educate the masses of African people and mobilise them to show their support for the masses of our people, and especially our kids who are shot down in the streets of Soweto, Rhodesia and Ethiopia. We are asking you to help the All African People's Revolutionary Party organise African Liberation Day throughout the African world.

You can help by:

1. Organising African Liberation Day in your area in solidarity with the All African People's Revolutionary Party (A-APRP)

2. Sending telegrams or letters of solidarity with the A-APRP to be read on May 28, 1977 (ALD)

In revolutionary struggle for Mother Africa and her scattered suffering children,
Stokely Carmichael,
Organizer, A-APRP.

EDITORIAL

CARNIVAL '77

Carnival 1977 is on. It will take place, as usual, on the streets of Notting Hill over the August Bank Holiday, Sunday and Monday 28 and 29. The steelbands men and women, the mas men and women, the sounds men and women have made this absolutely clear. Their declaration reads as follows:

> "During the last three months there has been a lot of uncertainty with respect to who is truly representative of organising Carnival 1977 and future Carnivals in Great Britain. We the steelbands men, mas men and sounds men of the Carnival Development Committee wish to inform all that we are responsible for Carnival 1977, for without us there can't be a West Indian Carnival."

This statement has been signed by all the steelbands, mas bands and a section of the sound systems which appeared on the streets of Notting Hill over last year's festival.

We know that the signed declaration has been given organisational form. The general council is the supreme body of the organisation. The council has elected a management committee with a Director at the helm. Sub-committees have been formed to take care of organisational detail.

The *Race Today* Collective has campaigned for the very principle on which the CDC has now decided to build a strong organisational base for this and future Carnivals. Our open letter to the Carnival Development Committee in the September 1976 issue of our journal and, again, another article in the February issue of *Race Today* bear witness.

We have now committed ourselves even further. Our editor, Darcus Howe, has been elected Chairman of the Carnival Development Committee for the year ending March 31, 1978, and his decision to accept has the full backing and support of our Collective. Our attitudes and views on Carnival have been public knowledge from 1974 to date.

We repeat them again:

1. That Carnival continue on the streets of Notting Hill for the forseeable future.

2. That policing of the festival be a matter for discussion between the CDC and the Home Secretary, to the end that the police maintain a low profile throughout the celebrations.

3. That the local council provide, from our rates, all the amenities needed for the massive public turnout on both Carnival days.

4. That the CDC organise proper seating arrangements (bleachers) for the overwhelming majority of those who attend the Carnival and so avoid the over concentration of large numbers in a small and congested area.

5. That the CDC accept the responsibility for informing the mass of Carnival enthusiasts and for being informed by them on all the major issues which affect the Carnival operations.

6. That it is the reponsibility of the relevant government institutions, local and national, to fund the Carnival in the same way and to the same degree that they fund other art and cultural forms in the society.

7. That the CDC refuse to compromise its fundamental declaration should those who donate make a compromise of fundamentals a condition for giving funds.

A principled programme and policy, combined with a sound organisational leadership, though necessary and important ingredients, do not in themselves make for a successful Carnival.

Of greatest importance is the Carnival spirit, and that too has started flowing. Ebony members boast that their 'Witches Opera' will win the day among mas enthusiasts. Sukuya's fans are campaigning for 'Guests at Regina's feast'. Among steelbandsmen and women, Rose's *Tempo*, Kitchener's and Sparrow's *Haseley Crawford,* Short Shirt's *Tourist Leggo* vie for Road March honours. And the pan tuners have already started cutting, sinking and grooving. The Jammin' will be constant until the day dawns.

Meanwhile, the rival committee fades into the background. After all, their chairman confessed, "I know nothing about Carnival".

Race Today Collective
March/April, 1977

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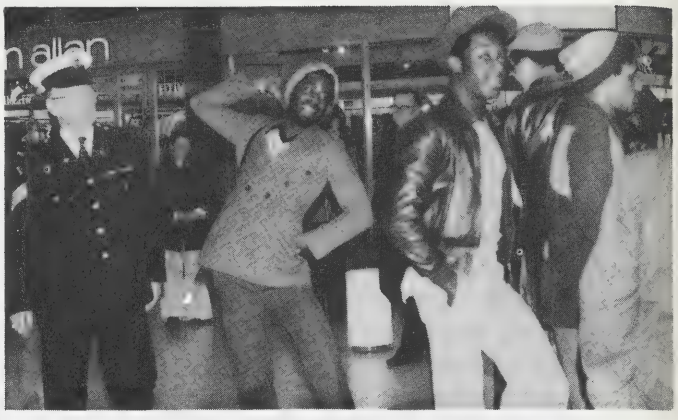
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BRADFORD DEFENDIN'

THE ARNDALE THREE





During the course of the last year, Arndale Mall, the large indoor shopping complex in the centre of Bradford, has become the scene of a struggle between young blacks on the one hand and private security guards on the other.

These hired heavies and the police have joined forces in an attempt to prevent young blacks from using the Mall as a social gathering place. The tactics are those used against young blacks up and down the country — constant harassment and frequent arrest.

It is in the context of this struggle that the case of The Arndale Three presents itself.

Tuesday, November 23, 1976: Clive Ryan, Richard Benjamin, and Trevor Smith enter Selfridges store in Arndale Mall to examine the new display of red, gold and green scarves. They are followed by a black security guard, Bill Richardson, the reigning Mr UK.

Since his appointment Richardson has been a constant source of harassment to black youth and Trevor (Smithy) in particular.

On this occasion he orders Smithy out of the shop. Smithy pauses at the door to call to Clive (Ryvus) and Richard (Benji). Richardson grabs him, pins his arm behind his back and calls the police. The police arrive and Smithy is escorted to the basement. Ryvus and Benji head for the goods entrance and arrive just in time to see the police van emerging with Smithy. The van swerves in front of them and out jump two policemen. Benji enquires about Smithy and as a result both he and Ryvus are arrested. All three are charged with creating a breach of the peace and released on bail.





Then, two weeks before the hearing, the word gets round that Ryvus has run into difficulties with his solicitors. A number of individuals get together with him and form a defence committee which discusses the errant solicitor and begins the search for an alternative defence. We manage to contact a London barrister who agrees to defend. Copies of the statements of the other two defendants are obtained from their solicitor who, in turn, receives a copy of Ryvus' statement. After a hectic and fruitless search in Bradford, the defence committee finally has to go to Leeds to find a suitable solicitor to instruct the barrister.

To The Chief Constable,
Yorkshire Metropolitan Police Force.

This meeting of members of the black community in Bradford, March 10, 1977, condemns the continual harassment of young blacks by officers of the West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police Force. Furthermore, this meeting moves that Clive Ryan, Richard Benjamin, and Trevor Smith were unjustly arrested and charged on November 23, 1976; and that Clive Ryan and Hubert Lindo were unjustly arrested and detained on February 11 of this year. Therefore, this meeting demands that all charges against Clive Ryan, Richard Benjamin and Trevor Smith be dropped immediately, and that they along with Hubert Lindo be adequately compensated.

Westgate Two and Arndale Three Defence Committee

Back in Bradford, back issues of *Race Today* are dug out and the experience of black defendants and defence committees is re-read and analysed. We attempt to mobilise support from within the black community. The response is encouraging. Young blacks, especially, see the case as another battle in the struggle against the police and Richardson. Ryvus, Benji, and Smithy become their champions and a significant section of them promise to turn out in support of The Three.

On March 9, we organised a public meeting to discuss the case and its implications.

Forty-eight hours before the hearing the police bring new charges of threatening behaviour against all three defendants. Smithy leaves town. The barrister says he can't make it.

Thursday, March 10: Benji, Ryvus, the defence committee, members of the black community and two white working class women turn up at the magistrates court. It's a good turn out and the two defendants respond to the support. Benji looks relaxed and confident. Ryvus is on form.

Inside the court, the clerk harangues the prosecution about the manner in which the new charges were brought. Apparently, he only found out about the charges 10 minutes before the hearing. The prosecution points out the fact that Smithy is absent and the clerk, who is running the show and loving every minute of it, grins and asks if the prosecution wants to take out a Bench Warrant against Smithy. The prosecution declines and the hearing is adjourned until May 19.

THE WESTGATE TWO

Friday, February 11, 1977: Ryvus and Hubert Lindo are walking down Westgate in the centre of Bradford. Suddenly, a police car swerves in front of them and they are surrounded by three policemen who proceed to handcuff and search them. Another police car arrives and the youths are bundled in without so much as a word of explanation.

On the way to the station they discover that they

have been arrested on 'sus'. They are suspected of having stolen over £100 worth of jeans and denim skirts from Western Jeans in Forster Square on the previous day. They protest their innocence but are told to 'shut up'!

Two hours later, Mrs Lindo, a West Indian mother of six and a nursing auxiliary, answers a knock at the door of her home in Girlington Road. The two police officers inform her that her son is being held on 'sus'. Her first reaction is one of disbelief (Hubert has never been in trouble with the police before). The police ask if they can search Hubert's room. She allows them to do so. They give the room a thorough going over — not a stolen denim in sight. As they leave they assure Mrs Lindo that they are returning to the station to release her son.

It is approximately 3.30 pm. Mrs Lindo waits until 9.0 pm — no sign of Hubert. She forwards to the station to enquire and the officer at the desk informs her that she cannot see him because he is sleeping. (Hubert's statement says differently.)

Saturday, 12: Mrs Lindo again forwards to the station at 9.0 am and, once again, the police refuse to let her see Hubert.

Meanwhile, Clive and Hubert have agreed to an I.D. parade and the police go up to the Mall — Arndale Mall — to try and round up some young blacks for this purpose. The youths refuse to stand in on the I.D. parade. Instead, they gather outside the police station in an impressive show of strength and solidarity.

By 3.30 pm the pressure's building up. The officer behind the desk is looking worried. Two members of the Arndale Three Defence Committee go off to phone a solicitor, a well known Labour Party man. After some pressure, he agrees to phone the station to enquire about the two youths. By the time the two return to the station the crowd has dispersed, and the officer behind the desk informs them that Ryvus and Hubert have been released.

They head for the Mall. As they approach the Mall, it becomes clear that the police are mounting a military operation. Police vans and dog patrols surround the shopping centre and officers on foot are entering the Mall by the Westgate entrance. Inside, they find Ryvus, Hubert and about 15 others in conference. They learn that shortly after the mass intervention of the youth, Ryvus and Hubert were driven to the Mall and instructed to mingle with the youths standing around. The police then produced a young white woman (later identified as a shop assistant in Western Jeans) who circled the group and pointed to another youth, Errol Brown (16), who was promptly arrested. Ryvus and Hubert are approximately five-eight — Errol is six foot plus.

No one is sure as to precisely what is going on. Suddenly, Bill Richardson, the black security guard, appears with the manager of the centre and a high ranking police officer. They tell the group to get out of the Mall. Richardson is shouting and the manager is waving a stick provocatively. The youths are ready to stand their ground and fight, unaware of the fact that this is only a small part of a much larger military force stationed in and around the Mall. The two defence committee members inform them of the deployment of forces in and around the Mall. They check it for themselves, weigh up the situation and decide upon an orderly retreat

Ryvus and Hubert are released and go with two members of the Arndale Three Defence Committee who proceed to take statements from both youths. On the basis of these statements a formal letter of complaint is drafted, approved by both youths and their parents,and forwarded to the Chief Constable of West Yorkshire Metropolitan Police Force.

The group finds the experiences of *Race Today* particularly helpful. After reading the section, 'File a Complaint' we are able to inform Mr and Mrs Lindo and Mrs Ryan of all the likely police manoeuvres around the issue of the complaint. We leave them with clear instructions as to how to deal with each piece of "babylonian trickery" i.e. pressure to drop the complaint, and unexpected calls by the investigating officer.

Three members of the group go with Ryvus with a view to taking civil action against the police. We decide upon the Labourite solicitor, who was contacted during Ryvus' and Hubert's 27 hour ordeal. Even before he is acquainted with the facts, this staunch Labourite informs the group that cases against the police are hard to prove and that he finds it difficult to believe that the police would hold a person for 27 hours without good reason. We demand that he take a statement. On the basis of that statement he would then inform the group of what civil action could be brought against the police.

Fortunately, the experience of the black community has taught us that we can depend upon no other force besides ourselves.

The Westgate Two Defence Committee is formed and its first action is to dismiss the Labourite lawman. Replies are sent to the Chief Constable's reply to the complaint assuring him that the complaint stands. Statements are taken from Mrs Lindo and Mrs Ryan; the former has been off work ever since the incident and has to take tranquillisers.

The mood in the black community is that the time has come to get the police off our backs and the two defence committees are the first manifestations of the determination of Bradford blacks to fight back.



THE BOGLE BOOKSHOP DIARY

Sunday, February 20	1.30 pm – Eric Huntley, proprietor of Bogle L'Ouverture bookshop arrives at the bookshop. He discovers obscene racist slogans smeared in paint over the front glass windows – **KKK, Niggers Out, White Power, Enoch.** Racists have left behind a tin of paint and a National Party propoganda leaflet. Jessica Huntley arrives in response to a call from Eric. Other friends come. Two uniformed police officers arrive 15 minutes after a telephone call to Ealing police station. Substance of their enquiries is as follows: Has this sort of thing occurred before? Does anybody live above the shop? Can we buy books at this shop? We are not against middle-aged black people like yourselves but those young black thugs outside. Do they (Jessica and Eric) know that the Ealing CRC window was smashed, also, the window of the Atlas bookshop and a Chinese take-away restaurant? They leave saying the CID will visit on Monday because they (the CID) don't work on Sundays.
Monday, February 21	am – No appearance yet from CID officers. Jessica and friends prepare a press statement to publicise the attack. 3.00 pm – Still no CID. Jessica phones Ealing police station. Informs Duty Officer she is still waiting for CID. Duty Officer tells her, Monday is a very busy day for CID, that the matter has been reported to Scotland Yard and, not to worry, the CID will be coming to take fingerprints.
Tuesday, February 22	Still no appearance from CID.
Wednesday, February 23	No sign of CID. Instead Jessica gets a telephone call from the Ealing police station. The officer wants an estimate of the damage to the bookshop. He repeats again that the matter has been reported to Scotland Yard. He reassures that CID will be coming to take samples from the tin of paint.
Thursday, February 24	No CID
Friday, February 25	No CID
Saturday, February 26	No CID
Sunday, February 27	No CID (but they don't work on Sundays, do they?)
Monday, February 28	A week has passed. Jessica writes a letter to the Commissioner of Police: "Your police visited us on Sunday, February 20, with a view to taking positive action. They had promised that the CID would be coming the following day to carry out forensic tests So far, to this date, February 28, none of your officers have returned and we can only conclude from this inaction that your police are not interested in carrying out their lawful duties. We hereby protest strongly at this total inaction and demand some further action be taken." Copy of letter also sent to Superintendant of Police at Ealing police station.
Friday, March 4	A Chief Insp. Yaldin telephones Jessica at the bookshop. Can he come and see her today about her letter? Jessica tells him it will be convenient for her to see him on Monday, March 7. Meantime she prepares a statement recording events as they have happened so far.

Monday, March 7

Chief Insp. Yaldin visits. Accompanied by a Supt. Hird, Community Liaison Officer for Ealing. Hird does all the talking. He says he knows all the facts relating to similar attacks in the area and has personally sent a report to Scotland Yard. He can't be certain however that there's a pattern to the attacks. There's nothing more the police can do.
Officers who came on Sunday, February 19, assumed the attack was a 'one-off' job. He adds that unless the vandals are caught in the act or in close proximity police can do nothing. He asks Jessica what else could the police do, she tells him that she has complained because she did not get the promised CID investigation. Hird says that taking a sample of paint will serve no useful purpose because paint is sold everywhere. Eric asks him what the police would do if murder had been committed. Hird says it depends on the degree.

Yaldin says he hopes after hearing what they (himself and Hird) have said, Jessica will withdraw her complaint. He says he will return the following day for her answer.

Tuesday, March 8

Chief Insp. Yaldin returns. Jessica tells him she has considered his invitation to withdraw her complaint and she will not withdraw.

Friday, April 1

Some 50 people — parents, youths, teachers, social workers, lawyers and representatives of black political organisations — met at St. James Parish Church Hall, Ealing. They came together to decide what action to take in the face of the failure of the police to act. The following resolution was passed overwhelmingly:

'Those of us attending this meeting and the undermentioned signatories, entrust the Bogle L'Ouverture Management and Ealing Concerned Parents and Youth to form a delegation.

We entrust the delegation to register to the Home Secretary the fact that the police have failed and neglected to carry out a proper investigation; that Supt. Hird had said that nothing could be done unless the police catch the person in or near the act.

We entrust the delegation to register to the Commissioner of Police the failure and neglect of the police in the Ealing Division to carry out an investigation and the response of Supt. Hird.

We entrust the delegation to register with the Home Secretary and the Commissioner of Police that this resolution has the total and unequivocal support of the black community and sections of the white community, who are outraged by the attack on the bookshop and the failure of the police generally to take action on matters of this kind.

We entrust the delegation to suspend all further meetings with the local police until it has met with the Home Secretary and the Commissioner of the Police.

We entrust the delegation to organise a recall meeting of those here present tonight to report on the result of its meeting with the Home Secretary and the Commissioner of Police and to decide the next steps to be taken.'

Following the defeat of Portuguese colonialism in Angola, military operations, organised from bases in Zaire, are to be mounted against the People's Republic of Angola.

On February 24, Agostinho Neto, President of the People's Republic of Angola, spoke to representatives of the Diplomatic Corps accredited in Luanda where he outlined, in detail, the external forces involved in attacks on his country.

PLOTTING AGAINST ANGOLA

I should like first to thank you for responding so promptly to my request that you should again come to this hall, this time, however, to hear some information which we think it necessary to give you.

The promptness with which comrade ambassadors have responded to this request clearly shows the excellent relations we maintain with a good many countries in the world and which we should like to maintain with other countries, provided the generally accepted principles of international relations are respected.

Indeed, we have made every effort to ensure that where any differences still exist, where there are differences of opinion, those differences might be lessened and overcome, for the good of relations between our peoples, between the people of the People's Republic





of Angola and the different peoples of the world. But good wishes are not always put into effect immediately. And sometimes it also becomes necessary to take defence measures, so that the people may live in peace and have the necessary security.

This meeting is called because on February 15 last, at a public rally held in Mbanza Congo, I spoke of the existence of puppet bases in a foreign country, a neighbouring country. That statement has been the subject of comments and distortions which require clarification. And I thought the best place and the best occasion to do so would be here before the ambassadors accredited here in Luanda

On our southern border, obviously, we have enemies who are the enemies of all of Africa. They are the South African racists. They are Africa's avowed enemies. And so long as that racist regime is not extinct on our continent, we shall not be able to live in peace.

No African country should regard itself as at peace so long as we have an enemy as powerful, as aggressive and as consistent in its hostile action against other peoples as is South Africa.

We have that neighbour occupying the territory of Namibia, a territory in which an independence struggle is developing but which, at present, is not yet free. That is why South African troops are occupying the territory and are on our border. Every day there are more troop movements. Our territory is invaded by puppet troops trained in Namibia who periodically infiltrate into our territory. Their main purpose is to try to destroy our alliance with SWAPO, the organisation which is fighting for Namibia's independence. This means that we are subject to physical aggression by South Africa, through Namibia. Hardly a day passes without reconnaissance planes, helicopters, vehicles and troops crossing our border. We could, on some other occasion, specify the dates and the places where such penetration has occurred.

HIJACKINGS

Today, however, I should like to be more precise about what is happening on our northern border. We have two neighbours on our northern border. One is the People's Republic of the Congo, the other the Republic of Zaire. While we have excellent relations of cooperation and friendship and an ever closer alliance with the People's Republic of the Congo, the same cannot be said of the Republic of Zaire.

True, we held a meeting last year to normalise relations. We attended that meeting in all sincerity and with the desire of a nation just emerged from war to find the peace which makes national reconstruction possible. But after we had gone to that meeting in Brazzaville, after we had undertaken to give fresh impetus to our relations with a view to eliminating differences, each country respecting the regime of the other, we learnt that right afterwards a so-called congress of puppets was held in the Republic of Zaire, in the capital, Kinshasa.

We must mention here that despite this, we held a few meetings of the so-called "Joint Commission" which was to have dealt with the technical aspects of our relations. Among other matters, the commission was to have seen to it that Angolan property which was taken out during the war, during the retreat of the Zairean army and the puppets who accompanied them, was returned to Angola. The amount of property involved is not negligible. I am going to mention the items, even though it may be tedious, in order to dispel any possible doubts.

The fact is that a substantial amount of property belonging to our country was taken away to Zaire, as well as to South Africa and to Zambia, where the puppets were fleeing to. Fortunately, we are now negotiating with Zambia for the return of everything that was taken there illegally, vehicles and other equipment which left here and which will be returned. That is Zambia's attitude. It is not the attitude of Zaire, where at least seven of our civil aircraft went, seven planes, three of them of the "Friendship" type, as well as others improperly removed from Angola.

On August 23, 1975, an aircraft, CA-LEP, was hijacked with a crew composed of Captain Nobrega, co-pilot Vidal, mechanic Oliveira and two women assistants, one of whom, Beatriz Silva, was released. We know the registration number, the type of aircraft, the serial number, the year of manufacture, the engine number, the type of propellers, in short all its characteristics.

A second aircraft, D2-TMV, was hijacked on October 17, 1975, with the following crew: Captain Mesquita, co-pilots Almeida e Costa and Gaioso, and mechanic Castro. We also have the particulars for identifying the plane.

A third aircraft, CR-LMU, piloted by Captain Sequeira, co-pilot Seraiva Reis, mechanic Elias and flight assistant C. Ferraz, a woman comrade who was the only person released.

A fourth plane, D2-TEM, had the following crew: Joao da Costa Neves Pimentel, captain, Joac Jorge de Miranda, co-pilot, and also four passengers who were subsequently released.

A fifth aircraft, CR-LDZ, was seized at Tchicape, on the Lunda border, on September 18, 1975. Again, we know the crew. The plane was piloted by Sandao dos Santos, and among the passengers were engineers Guerra, Soares Pinto and James Martin.

A sixth aircraft, CR-LMX, was hijacked from Lobito to Zaire, again under the same circumstances. Here too we know the names of the crew.

A seventh aircraft, CR-LKK, was also hijacked from Angola, from Bie Province.

Those planes are now being used in Zaire. The registration marks have been removed. New registration marks have been put on them. Today they are being used by Zaire's civil air lines. And by chance we have received irrefutable proof of this. The air line "Air Congo", the former name of "Air Zaire", based in what was then Leopoldville, now Kinshasa, received the following order from its airport at Ndgili: "Enlever L'immatriculation sur les trois avions angolais, et repeindre completement en peinture blanche" (remove registration marks from the three Angolan planes and repaint completely white). This fell into our hands because the bill was sent to Transportes Aereos Portugueses, in Lisbon, who said to themselves that "since the planes are Angolan, the bill should be sent to Angola"! And the registration numbers are the very ones we have here. The documents are available for examination if necessary.

But it was not only planes. There were countless vehicles. At least fifteen thousand head of cattle

were taken from the Camabatala genetic centre, and many tons of coffee were taken — we cannot estimate exactly how much — and millions of colonial escudos.

Obviously, under conditions of war, we were also left which some Zairean goods. It was not because we wanted them, but owing to the circumstances.

Zaire used to use our Benguela Railway. Some minerals such as copper and manganese were left. Zaire also left oil tank cars and other equipment, some of which is still in Angola.

When talks started in the Joint Commission, we decided to send back the commodities, mainly copper and manganese, and to return the tank cars. But since the talks on all these differences were stopped, we again cancelled the return of the items belonging to Zaire. Therefore, this is a problem which still exists and which we should like to solve as quickly as possible, but we have not had a favourable or adequate response from the other party.

We have also captured some fishing boats here, in our territorial waters, Zairean fishing boats, just as we have captured boats of other nationalities. This seems to be a form of piracy which is widely used, since it is known that our coastal defence is not as yet well organised.

MILITARY BASES

Meanwhile, we should like to show the comrades assembled here the military effectives that Zaire has for action against Angola.

As I said on February 15, men and material are being infiltrated into Angola, where they act against the interests of the Angolan people and against the People's Republic of Angola.

Comrade Commander Monstro Imortal can indicate the positions of the bases along our borders which constitute a permanent threat to our country.

Commander Monstro Imortal, a member of the MPLA Political Bureau and Deputy Chief of Staff of FAPLA, then showed the following bases on the map displayed in the hall.

– Matadi "FNLA" base. Kamura base, 10 km from the Angolan border, north of Benza Lambo.
– Luana base, south of Matadi, at the confluence of the Neposo and Cumbi rivers.
– Songololo base, 45 km from the border, north of Luvo.
– Kuizi base, 10 km from the frontier, north-east of Buela (Angolan village).
– Tombo Yanga base, 300 km east of Necuto (Cabinda Province).
– Luali base, 30 km east of Lake N'Lele (Cabinda Province).
– Kay-Kazabe base, 50 km north-east of Kinganga (Cabinda Province).
– Kaiku Dinge base, 70 km north-east of Kay-Kazabe.
– Vata-Ukidi base, 30 km east of Necuto.
– Tshela base, 350 km from the border, east of Necuto.
– Kinkula base, 45 km north-east of Satali (Uige Province).
– Kasango-Lunda base, on the right bank of the Cuango river (Uige Province).
– Tembo-Aluna base, north-north-east of the Guilherme falls (Uige Province).
– Kizamba base, east of the Guilherme falls.
– Tchicapa base, about 200 km from the Cuango river (Uige Province).
– Kinkuzu base as the main centre of operational activities.
There is also another FNLA unit concentrated at Kairemba.

Comrade President continued:

Some of these bases are not just puppet bases. They are joint bases where there are also Zairean soldiers, like for instance the Tshela base east of Cabinda Province, the Matadi base, and other transit bases lying between Kinshasa and the Angolan border.

I think Comrade Commander Monstro Imortal forgot to mention the bases in the east. There are also bases in the east, where Zaire borders on Lunda Province.

But most of the bases are concentrated there, and if we look at the location of the different garrisons where the Zairean military forces are concentrated it is easy to see that they are positioned near the Angolan border. Most of the Zairean military forces are now near the Angolan border and not further north, although they have some scattered forces in the Lake Tanganyika area and also further to the north.

OPERATION COBRA 77/OPERATION CHRISTMAS

When we were already aware of these facts, we received information that preparations were being made for a military operation called "Operation Cobra 77", to be carried out by elements we well know, all the puppets of the FNLA, FLEC, ELP, and mercenaries.

Naturally, the operation would be against Angola and would take place in September-October this year, 1977.

The operation has been planned as a large-scale operation, with the participation of aircraft, armoured cars and seaborne forces. The operation was to take place principally in Cabinda Province, at the start, and then to advance on the southern part of our territory.

Those in charge of this operation have been appointed. I am not going to overburden this information mentioning all the names. I shall mention just a few of them. The person in charge of the military operations services for the attack on Cabinda, known as General Staff Three, is Colonel Mutomo Pierre, a general staff technician trained at Saint Cyr, in France. and Fort Bray. He is a military operations technician. Colonel Mike Brown, an American, is in Africa with a group of 30 men. Colonel Johnson, another American, was a major and commander of the American green berets in the guerrilla war in Bolivia in 1966-67. Colonel William Thompson is in charge of the 82nd Airborne Division, which comprises 1200 men.

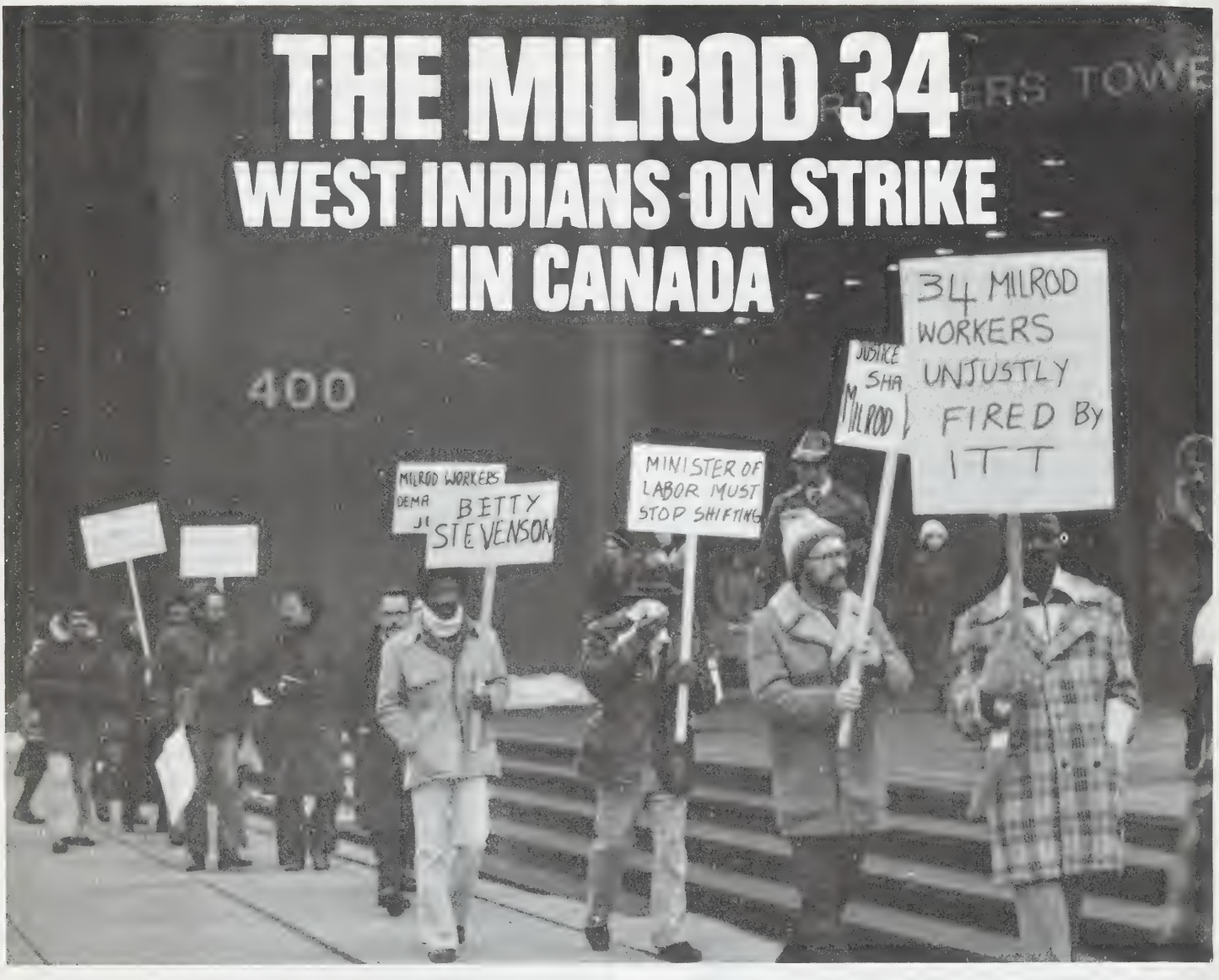
Finally, others are in charge of reconnaissance, military administration, logistics, sea cover, and the use of the air force.

This operation, which has been planned to liquidate the People's Republic of Angola, also goes by other names. In Europe, for example, it is not known as Operation Cobra 77. It is called Operation Christmas in Angola.

Well, these are irrefutable facts which again warrant our drawing the attention of world opinion to the fact that we in Angola, engaged in the task of national reconstruction, cannot fulfil that task effectively, precisely because of the disturbances we are experiencing on our borders.

It is a fact that there has been infiltration of our northern frontier strip and of the southern strip. There are clear signs of puppets being sent in to cause material damage, to carry out massacres of the population and, hence, to prevent the development of our country.

THE MILROD 34
WEST INDIANS ON STRIKE IN CANADA



Light industry is one of the crucial areas in which immigrant workers are highly concentrated in the Toronto area of Canada.

Employers, assisted by government policy, have transformed the industrial face of Toronto in the last 25 years, by shutting down large and small factories in the city, and ringing the suburbs with small light manufacturing plants.

The Toronto area has more than 6,200 industrial plants, but only 300 employ more than 200 workers. Many of these plants are owned by large multi-national companies, who locate and re-locate wherever in the world they can find the cheapest source of labour.

In Toronto, that cheap source of labour has been recent immigrants – Italian, Portuguese, Greek, West Indian and Asian. Recently, the Metro Toronto Industrial Commission boasted that average wages in manufacturing in the Toronto area are about 15-20% lower than for Ontario as a whole.

Immigrant workers, in recent years, have organised major struggles against the low-paid, overworked status to which employers and the government have tried to confine them. Between 1970 and 1973, Italian, Greek and Southern European workers engaged their employers in a series of strikes. Mass sackings, police brutality and arrests were sufficient to prevent the workers from taking any major strike action in the last three years.

Toronto's newest immigrants, West Indians and Asians, have taken up this particular tradition of struggle. Between May and October 1976, West Indian and Asian workers, at the I.T.T. subsidiary, Milrod Metal Products, in Mississauga, Toronto carried the fight to management over the issue of speed-up on the assembly line. 34 workers, all but two black, were fired as a result.

The matter was taken up at the Ontario Labour Relations Board which had to decide whether the mass firings were, in effect, an illegal lock-out. Last month, March 2, the Board handed down its decision; that management acted in a "high handed way" but not illegally.

One board official dissented. Trade Union official, P. J. O'Keefe, stated that the company deliberately chose a mass firing in order to "frustrate the employees' right to grieve by creating insuperable procedural and financial obstacles".

From Toronto, John Huot describes the background to the Milrod struggle.

Milrod Metal Products is a typical Toronto-area plant. It employs 200 unskilled workers drawn from five different immigrant groups (West Indian, Indian, Greek, Italian, Portuguese), with few native-born workers.

The workers produce dashboards, bumpers, and window frames for General Motors and other auto companies. The majority of workers operate punch presses on a line, with each press doing its thing to a piece of material as it goes down the line. Each press has its own individual counter to keep track of the number of pieces each worker handles per shift. Other plant workers do spot welding, feed the the lines with materials and pack the finished products, or work in the machine shop.

Milrod is a labour-intensive operation, with comparatively low investment in plant and machinery. This means that workers operate old and often dangerous machines, which can malfunction unexpectedly and cut off a finger. The low investment tied up at Milrod also means that the company need stay at the Mississauga location only as long as it has a steady supply of low cost workers, who have little choice but to take unskilled jobs in small plants like Milrod.

The federal government's immigration policies have ensured that such low cost labour is available to companies like Milrod. They bring in new groups of immigrants as older groups get stronger and demand better wages and working conditions.

Milrod employed mainly southern European male immigrants until the late 1960's. They then started hiring from the first generation of West Indian and Asian workers to be admitted to Canada under the revised 1967 immigration regulations.

In 1974, Milrod reached further into this new source of workers by hiring its first women workers. By mid-1976, about two-thirds of the work force were black (mainly Jamaican and Indian), one-fifth of which were women. Most of these workers are in their 30's and 40's, supporting families in Canada, and often sending money to dependants in their home countries.

This is how Mrs. Ena Smith, one of the fired workers, described Milrod's use of race to obtain workers it could force to work hard for low wages:

> "Most of the time the black workers are put on the hardest jobs. They know that black people don't have the franchise here as whites do. When you're white, it's easier to get another job in Canada. Most of the time when black people get the hard job, you've got to stick it."

The fired workers say there was no racial tension among workers when black workers first came into the plant. But the company has done its best to promote racial tension by treating blacks and whites differently in job assignments, shift changes, and disciplinary measures.

In 1975, management even adopted an old trick from the days of slavery by appointing, as supervisor, the local union president, a Jamaican with a reputation for being tough with management. He became the company's number one slave driver during the speed-up campaign in 1976.

Unlike most small plants employing immigrant workers in the Toronto area, Milrod has a union — the International Association of Machinists (IAM), one of the oldest US-based skilled workers' unions. The IAM currently represents such highly paid and powerful groups of mainly white workers as airline mechanics.

For Milrod's unskilled immigrant workers, the IAM seems to function mainly as a negotiator of mediocre contracts, a collector of $8 monthly dues, and as a straitjacket on shop floor struggles, channelling them to arbitrators and the Ontario Labour Relations Board.

At the shop floor and local levels of the union, workers have the possibility, in a small plant, of choosing stewards and executives who are responsive to workers' needs and accountable for their actions; and the Milrod workers have done so. But any struggle which goes beyond the narrow bounds of the contract throws the workers into the hands of the IAM business rep and other union high-ups.

So there has been much talk among the workers about bringing in a new union. They mention the Teamsters or the United Auto Workers. They see that transport drivers, warehouse workers and auto workers work less and get higher wages, and this they attribute to the unions. After the firings, 70%



Ena Smith, shop stewardess at Milrod and Jamaican spokeswoman for strike committee.

of the workers still employed by Milrod signed a petition to throw out the IAM. When the workers applied to the Labour Relations Board to make this official, it was the company, not the IAM, which challenged the application.

For a considerable period of time, Milrod's racist policies appear to have been relatively successful. Milrod had a hard-working labour force, in fact, many of the fired workers have worked at Milrod for several years, and had earlier received letters of commendation from management. Few had ever been previously disciplined.

Wages were about average for unionised plants employing immigrant labour in the Toronto area — $4.35 an hour for assembly-line workers, with no cost of living allowance and few benefits. Management retains complete power to assign workers to any job or shift without notice, regardless of seniority, which leaves the door wide open to arbitrary and discriminatory decisions affecting the worker's day-to-day life.

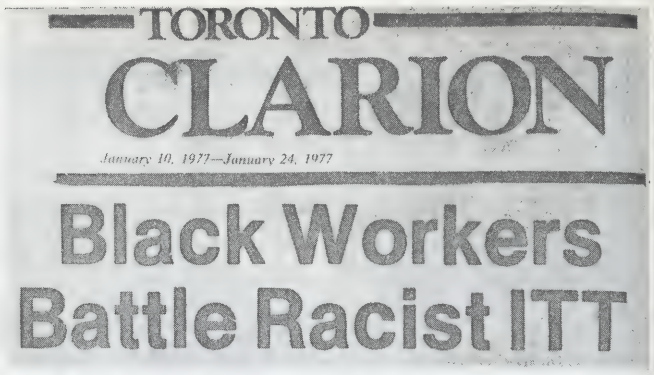
The success of Milrod's racist practices towards black workers meant that every worker in the plant, black or white, ended up working harder, in dangerous conditions, for low wages. The benefits white workers get in this type of situation add little or nothing to the pay check at the end of the week. They add even less in terms of more time, health or energy for the worker's life off the job.

If Milrod's racist practices towards black workers were the key to forcing all Milrod workers to work harder for less money, then the rebellion of the black workers against these racist practices has been the key factor challenging this situation of all workers in the plant.

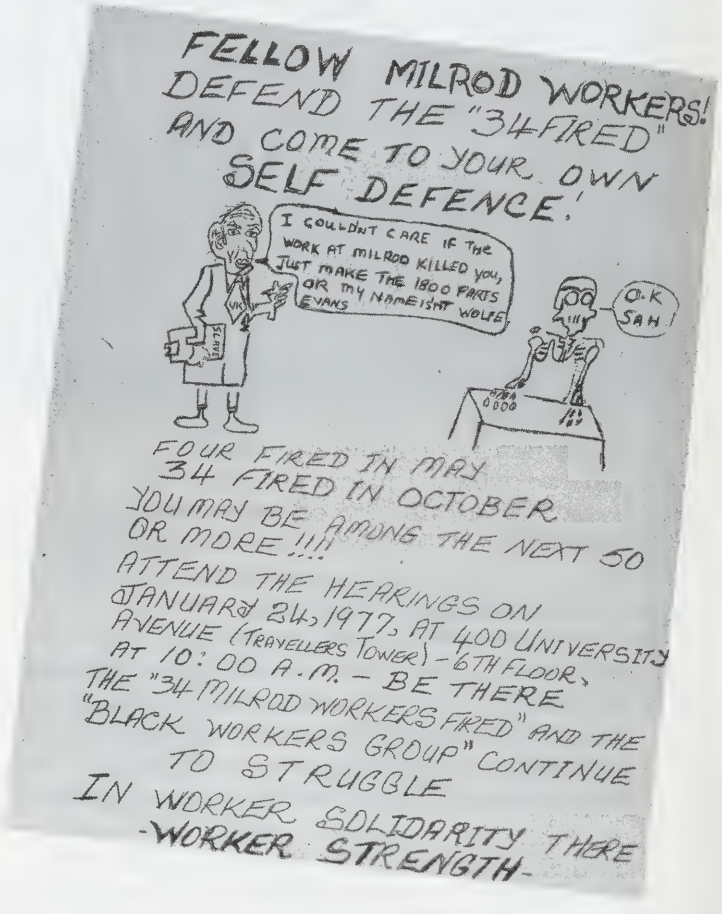
The black workers' rebellion was sparked by a speed-up campaign in 1976, instituted by a new ITT-appointed management team and spearheaded on the shop floor by plant superintendent Wilfred Evans. Workers, testifying at the Ontario Labour Relations Board hearing, have detailed the speed-up campaign. Production quotas were increased by one-third to one-half, depending on the line. On one line where five workers used to turn out 1,300-1,400 bumpers a shift, 1,800 were demanded from three workers. In another operation, where two women and a man produce 1,000 units a shift, the company replaced the man with another woman and raised the quota to 1,200 units.

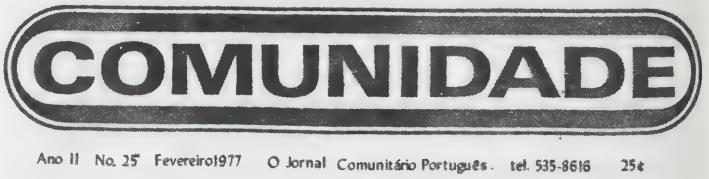
Workers were injuring themselves trying to meet quotas, and the company was not responding to forms sent out by the Workmen's Compensation Board. This resulted in a delay in payments. "We are killing ourselves trying to meet production quotas", said Rahim Siraj, president of the Milrod union local.

The company stepped up harassment to force workers to meet the new quotas. Workers were switched around to unfamiliar machines and expected to make the quota. A male supervisor pushed his way into the women's washroom after he had complained about the time women workers were taking.


TORONTO
CLARION
January 10, 1977—January 24, 1977
Black Workers Battle Racist ITT


The Toronto Star
32 FIRED BLACKS CHARGE RACISM




COMUNIDADE

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OPERÁRIOS ACUSAM FÁBRICA DE CONDIÇÕES PERIGOSAS

The hardest jobs were on the Chevy truck line, which produces dashboards for Chevrolet trucks. The slave-driving former union president was in charge of this line. In May, 1976, plant workers circulated a petition to have this supervisor removed. When the company failed to respond, day shift workers held a half-hour work stoppage in the plant to protest. Later the same day, four Jamaican workers, from the Chevy truck line, were suspended indefinitely and subsequently fired. Their cases are still being dealt with separately in arbitration.

In late August, Rahim Siraj was suspended for a day "for low production". Night-shift workers stopped work, and refused to leave the plant until the police showed up. Many returned the next morning to inform day shift workers of Siraj's suspension. The workers decided to start a plant-wide strike to demand realistic production quotas, safe working conditions, and Siraj's re-instatement with full compensation. The strike and the demands were decided upon by the workers themselves, without consulting the IAM business rep or other union high-ups.

Support for the 11-day strike was almost 100% from both black and white workers, to the point that no picket line was needed to maintain the strike. The fact that Milrod workers were so united, and that the company dared not attempt to bring in scabs, is very significant. During the struggles waged by immigrant workers in the Toronto area in the early 1970's, strike-breaking, militant picket lines and police intervention were common.

The workers also successfully demanded that the IAM allow them to choose their own lawyer to represent them at the Labour Relations Board hearing at which the company eventually won a ruling that the strike was illegal. Faced with the threat of heavy fines, the workers decided to end the strike without winning any concessions from the company.

After the return to work on September 9, harassment of black workers intensified. The Chevy truck line became almost entirely black as those referred to as "trouble makers" were transferred there, if they were not already on that line.

Plant superintendent Evans called the Chevy line workers to two meetings in the cafeteria to demand that production quotas be met. Several workers have testified at the Labour Board hearing that Evans told them: "You are all immigrants here and you have to work hard. If you don't want to work, go back to your country."

Other workers have testified that Evans boasted: "I'll soon get rid of all you black niggers out of here".

In the following weeks, workers on both shifts of the Chevy line received disciplinary warnings for low production. On October 19, 34 of them, all but two black, representing almost the entire line on both shifts, were fired. The company charged them with conducting a deliberate slow-down.

The next morning, the fired day shift workers returned to the plant and went to the cafeteria along with more than half the other day shift workers. They were ready to strike immediately in support of the fired workers, but were talked out of it by the IAM business rep.

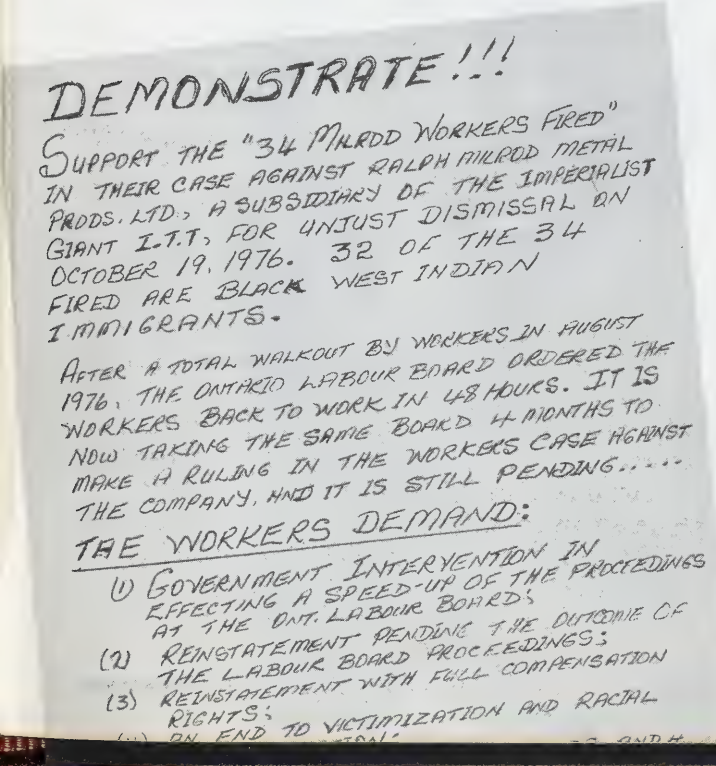
> "He told us that the lawyer told him it would be a harder case for him to fight. He would have to be fighting an illegal strike and for the 34 fired workers. So he persuaded the workers to go back to work, and they'd handle our case through the Labour Board, which would be easier for him," one of the fired workers recalls.

In addition to convincing the workers not to use their power to shut down the plant and keep pressure on Milrod, the IAM has also done nothing to publicise or broaden support for the fired workers among the workers still in the plant or among other trade unions. The IAM has limited itself to hiring a lawyer, filing a complaint with the Human Rights Commission and arguing at the Labour Board that the firings constitute an illegal lockout.

It has been the fired workers themselves, assisted by the Black Workers Group, a local black organisation, who have begun to organise a broad movement of support. . . around four demands: Immediate re-instatement of all fired workers with full compensation for lost wages and full seniority rights; An end to victimisation and racial discrimination; Realistic production standards; A safe and healthy place to work.

To build support, the workers have first mobilised the strength of the black community in Toronto. They have publicised their struggle in the daily press, the black weekly press, and the television.

Evidence of the strength of the black community's support could be experienced at a benefit dance the Milrod workers organised in December, attended by about 400 black people from all sections of the black community, including black youth. Significantly, many Indian and


DEMONSTRATE!!!

SUPPORT THE "34 MILROD WORKERS FIRED" IN THEIR CASE AGAINST RALPH MILROD METAL PRODS. LTD., A SUBSIDIARY OF THE IMPERIALIST GIANT I.T.T., FOR UNJUST DISMISSAL ON OCTOBER 19, 1976. 32 OF THE 34 FIRED ARE BLACK WEST INDIAN IMMIGRANTS.

AFTER A TOTAL WALKOUT BY WORKERS IN AUGUST 1976, THE ONTARIO LABOUR BOARD ORDERED THE WORKERS BACK TO WORK IN 48 HOURS. IT IS NOW TAKING THE SAME BOARD 4 MONTHS TO MAKE A RULING IN THE WORKERS CASE AGAINST THE COMPANY, AND IT IS STILL PENDING.....

THE WORKERS DEMAND:

(1) GOVERNMENT INTERVENTION IN EFFECTING A SPEED-UP OF THE PROCEEDINGS AT THE ONT. LABOUR BOARD;
(2) REINSTATEMENT PENDING THE OUTCOME OF THE LABOUR BOARD PROCEEDINGS;
(3) REINSTATEMENT WITH FULL COMPENSATION
RIGHTS;
(4) AN END TO VICTIMIZATION AND RACIAL

white immigrant workers from the plant also attended, and a number of plant workers who could not attend raised about $100 in the plant.

The most dramatic display of the fired workers' strength has been at the Labour Board hearing. Normally, workers are intimidated by these hearings, where company and union lawyers use the workers' testimony to argue fine points of law, while the three-man Labour Board panel sits in solemn, 'impartial' judgement.

Most of the fired Milrod workers attend the hearing. They have been shouting "Right! Right!" when one of their fellow workers describes working conditions in the plant, and "No! No!" when a worker gets a hard time from the company lawyer. The panel chairman has tried several times without success to instruct the workers about how things are done in Canada: workers have the right to attend hearings dealing with matters of vital concern to them only if they remain silent.

When Winston Mauricette, one of the fired workers, was questioned about his work by the company lawyer, he retorted: "Don't get on a high horse. Don't shout at me. If you want to talk to me, do so as a human being", as workers in the spectator section shouted their approval.

The company lawyer is Edwin Stringer, a notorious hired gun for many small Toronto-area companies employing immigrant labour. He appears often at the Labour Board to oppose the formation of unions in plants or to defend company disciplinary measures against workers. Besides the Milrod case, he is presently collecting fat fees defending the right of Puretex Knitting Co., a Toronto plant which employs 200 women immigrant workers, to use close-circuit TV to watch the workers all over the plant, including the entrance to the women's washroom and change areas.

During the questioning of one worker during the December 20 hearing, workers became so angry, shouting, "There's no justice in Canada!" that the hearing had to be adjourned for 30 minutes.

During another "cooling off" adjournment, workers directed a steady barrage of taunts and insults at Milrod management, who were huddled apprehensively at the front of the hearing room. The respect and fear which the Board, company and union displayed towards the workers at the hearings was perhaps sharpened by a dramatic incident in mid-January in Windsor, Ontario, Canada's car manufacturing capital. A fired black auto worker, who was angry at the union's failure to get him re-instated, calmly walked into the union hall, cleared everyone out except the branch president, and then methodically shot him dead. A number of plainclothes cops began attending the Milrod Labour Board hearings following this incident.

The Labour Board hearings concluded in early February. On March 2, the Labour Board, in a split two to one ruling, rejected the workers' contention that the mass firing was, in effect, an illegal lockout.

Decisions in favour of workers at the Labour Board are as rare as the kind of battle the Milrod workers have been carrying on at their hearing. Even though the Labour Board found against them, the attitude of black workers at the hearing certainly demonstrated to all workers, black or white, that labour boards and lawyers are not so all powerful when confronted with the workers' organised strength.

The Milrod workers are now moving to deepen the mobilisation of the black community. Leaflets have been distributed in the black community, and two demonstrations were organised in early February in front of the Labour Relations Board. Quite recently they sought support at the Congress of Commonwealth Caribbean Immigrants in Montreal. This conference brought together representatives of West Indian organisations in Canada and of different organisations in the Caribbean. The Milrod workers believe their struggle is important for workers in the Caribbean as well as in Canada.

The fired workers are also moving to win support from white workers in Toronto, both immigrant and native-born. Their slogan, 'The job of no immigrant is secure unless the jobs of all immigrants are secure', emphasises that the outcome of their struggle will affect the strength of all immigrant workers in Toronto.

Several union branches, as well as the Ontario Federation of Labour, to which most unions in Ontario are affiliated, have passed resolutions of support, but done little else for the Milrod workers.

The Milrod workers have also made clear they do not need missionaries from white left organisations. One such group, calling itself the Canadian Communist League, has already jumped into the fray. It has attempted unsuccessfully to set up its own 'Milrod Defence Committee', separate from the organisation the fired workers put together themselves. This group has succeeded in creating a certain atmosphere of distrust for white activists, which makes the Milrod workers' goal of soliciting white workers' support more difficult.

In all the activities of the black Milrod workers, both in the struggle against speed-up in the plant and in the campaign for their re-instatement, there is a living illustration of a section of the working class feeling its way forward in unfamiliar surroundings, discovering who its friends and enemies are in relation to its own concrete needs.

As a member of the Black Workers Group put it:

> "Right-wing whites say blacks have a chip on their shoulder, left-wing whites say we are racist. They feel they have to control black people all the time. We say we have a legitimate right to organise ourselves. Your struggle can't be like my struggle because we have a completely different history. We hope that people in the white community will recognise this and come up with a show of solidarity. Some white leftists are running around saying they want to organise us. We can organise ourselves. What we want from whites is for them to get out into their own community and mobilise support."

The election swept Janata to power in the agrarian states of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. The Hindi speaking states, in which the Congress has, over the last 15 years, created a class of capitalist landlords and created, at the same time, a mass of agricultural labour, went to the Janata. In West Bengal, the Marxist Communists and the Janata are the dominant forces in the government. In Tamil Nadu, the southern-most state, whose government was dissolved for anti-Congress activity last year, the All India Anna-Dravidra Munetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) came to power on a pro-Congress platform and immediately switched its allegiance to the Janata Party, pledging itself to the reconstruction that Prime Minister Desai promises.

Before resigning, Indira Gandhi herself repealed the emergency. One of the first acts of the Janata government has been the reinstatement of the railway workers who were dismissed after the military defeat of the 1974 railway strike. Janata has also freed the press and released the prisoners held under the emergency. Janata has declared no principles by which they are prepared to govern. They are still, despite all the mapping of the old allegiances, an unknown force. One of their ministers has declared to the Indian press that 'Janata has to be socialist to survive'. Morarji has said that all agreements with the Soviet Union will be honoured but that new links would open with the West.

Janata is clearly not a party that was put into

THE FALL OF INDIRA

FARRUKH DHONDY



power to carry out a programme. Their platform was anti-Indira, and on that platform they carried the Indian peasantry and working class. After the election victory, literally millions of people flowed into the mass meetings held outside the residences of the victors. The rally outside the house of Jagjivan Ram chanted for half-an-hour the slogan of 'Tanashahi murdabad' (death to the dictatorship). At the victory rally held by George Fernandes, the Socialist Party leader, who is now part of the Janata government, there were full-throated cries of 'natak band karo, shapat lo' (stop the drama, take the oath). At the rallies one fact emerged. The voters were not going to tolerate the wheeling and dealing which characterises the power plays of Indian politics any more. They want a programme from Janata.

So far, Janata's acts have been political stunts. Sanjay Gandhi's financial dealings are to be investigated. He has been charged on 47 counts of the illegal use of his position as Prime Minister's son to further himself. Prime Minister Desai, addressing himself to the issue which was responsible for a surge of antagonism to Congress, has said that India will continue with its birth control programmes but that no compulsion would be used. He relied, he said, on the great example of the Hindu religion and its principles of self-restraint to bring about a fall in population.



Janata will have to be more realistic than that if it is to solve the primary problems of the ownership of land, and if it is to answer the demands for wage increases which are the first focus of the resurgent workers' movement. Their young ideologist, Chandra Shekhar, originally a Congress member, imprisoned by Gandhi under the emergency, declares the Janata will institute a legislative programme against poverty, unemployment and in favour of social justice.

In calling the Indian election, and losing it by an unprecedented landslide, Mrs Indira Gandhi committed political suicide. She has dragged with her the Congress Party, which has ruled India for all its years since independence in 1947.

In mid-March, the Indian electorate declared its allegiances, swept 81 year old Mr Morarji Desai to the Prime Ministership and installed a Janata government at the centre.

Out of the 542 seats in the Lok Sabha, Congress held on to 153; they had 355 in Indira's parliament. Desai's coalition won 270. The defecting Congress for Democracy gave Janata the further support of 27 votes in the house.

No Indian or Western commentator foresaw the impending election or the overwhelming defeat of the dictatorship and emergency regime of Congress. It is left to us, after the fact, to ask and answer the question posed by Indira's defeat. Why did she hold an election at all. Why didn't she rig it? The answer to the first is that she had to. The answer to the second is that she couldn't.

Events after and during the election have shown that the Congress Party itself, which had imposed the emergency, had taken away fundamental rights from the population. It was engaged in carrying out a firm and final defeat of the organised and spontaneous forces of the working class and peasantry, and in so doing, began to crack under the strain.

The Chief Ministers of several states had reported to the centre that the sterilisation laws, the bonus statute and the open rule of the police and paramilitary forces in the interests of landlords in the rural constituencies was causing mass discontent. The story of that discontent has not yet been told. The censored press was unable to tell the people that in the estimation of Congress leaders in Maharashtra, in Orissa, in Tamil Nadu, in Bihar, in Uttar Pradesh, the small pockets of revolt against sterilisation and the bonus had developed into open revolt.

The emergency had been imposed to create conditions for capitalist investment in India. If the Congress couldn't show the IMF and the international monopolies that the working class had been defeated to the point where wage demands and bonus demands could be kept in check, there would be no flow of capital to the country. Indira had to consolidate. She had to prove to the world that an emergency regime was a popular regime, or at least a stable one with a fixed pattern of development through investment from the combined capital of the Soviet and Western blocs. After Ngo Din Diem and President Thieu, the west had learnt its lesson. There was to be no flow of investment to unpopular or unstable regimes. The threat of financial starvation from without and the break-up of the Congress Party from within, forced Indira to the March election.

The conduct of the election was undoubtedly influenced by the experience of Pakistan which held an election a month earlier. Whether that election was rigged or not is still an open question, but the allegation of rigging brought to the fore a continuing battle between the army of Pakistan and a substantial section of the population.

What the emergency in India could not do was imprison the army, even though it could silence, for a time, the leaders of the opposition to Congress, by taking a quarter of a million people into custody. The rigging of the Indian elections would inevitably have led to public disorder and army intervention and Indira couldn't be sure on which side the army would intervene.

In a matter of months, rather than years, the new government of India will have to prove itself. The wave of popular resentment against the Gandhi regime is now in the process of converting itself into a people's movement with a material programme and demands.

BACKLASH

UP AGAINST THE LAW

In several issues of *Race Today* we reported the details of a case in Harlesden where six young black women were arrested and beaten in a confrontation between police officers and a crowd of young blacks.

Two of the women, Rosa T and Hyacinth M, who were given suspended prison sentences at the Willesden Magistrates Court, recently had their appeals against conviction and sentence rejected.

The presiding judge, C M Clothier, QC, defied normal practice in which judges reject appeals without comment. He delivered a lengthy political speech which upheld the police case and exonerated their violent behaviour,even though the prosecutor conceded that the police used excessive violence.

The police and the courts are increasingly being confronted with black defendants who, like Rosa and Hyacinth refuse to be passive victims. Judges, therefore, will, more and more, use their function and position to be propaganda merchants for the forces of law and order.

Below, we paraphrase C M Clothier's speech.

'We have found these cases difficult and anxious. In as much as we hear the case over again we act as jurymen. We must not uphold unless we are quite sure. That we have done. In our opinion the appeals fail. Both appellants are guilty as charged.

We think it right to express some of our thoughts. We have been careful not to involve ourselves in police conduct as opposed to the conduct of the appellants. The only true relevance of the police conduct is whether it is true the appellants assaulted them or were themselves assaulted. That is the only materiality. We come to no conclusion regarding the use of excessive force by the police. We think it undesirable to come to a conclusion. There is ample machinery to investigate and we understand it is in motion.

The whole incident is dismally familiar. It all began with people coming out of the Burning Spear Club at 3.30 am. That night was in the midst of the warmest and driest spells of weather. It is very likely that young people were in no mood to go home or be quiet. It is probable and natural they wished to continue their enjoyment and the banging on doors and windows was perfectly natural. But it is also irritating to those in bed who have to go to work the next day. It is the job of the police to put a stop to this. It is within their rights to stop it. The police did try in a peaceable and reasonable manner.

The first patrol was not looking for trouble. They called through the window of the car to keep quiet. No notice was taken. When they were unsuccessful they got out. We are in no doubt at all that when the police approached them they reacted in a hostile and unreasonable manner. They would not comply. We noted one young woman was not on her way home.

The result of the encounter was depressingly predictable. There was a refusal to disperse. Insults were offered to the police which they warmly reciprocated. There was an attempt to arrest the most vociferous including the two appellants. There was a vigorous scuffle. All the men moved off not wishing to encounter trouble.

To be candid, we are not greatly helped by attempts to dissect those few minutes. It was a fluid and changing scene. It is difficult to get consistent accounts even with a succession of most honest observers. Each sees events differently. Each person's account will differ from time to time.

In the end, we are in no doubt at all that the two appellants strenuously refused to do as asked. We are in no doubt that great difficulty was experienced in arresting them. That easily accounts for their injuries, injuries which were wholly trivial. It is significant that they both refused to be examined by a doctor properly called to see them there and then. By curious coincidence he was Indian and a highly qualified Indian.

We want to pause to say how much we regret that colour is made an issue. Colour is not a relevant circumstance. Groups of white youths behave as badly as black youths and the police deal with them just as firmly. It is a mark of crudity that the adjectives black and white are used. People are not black, they are different shades of brown. Very few people are white. They tend to be pink. It's a deplorable crudity and we wish the words could be abolished.

A word about two of the witnesses, Mrs C and Mr A. We were immensly impressed by both and are sure they are excellent citizens. But we are quite sure that neither saw the whole incident and could not identify any of the people concerned. Mrs C did not see the whole scene having missed 10 minutes. Mr A did not see the initial events. We think the whole episode is chrystallised in the encounter with two police constables by Mr A which was described also by Mrs C. He remonstrated and said the police constables were too rough. They replied, 'look at the way your girls behave. They are like wild animals'. That put the case in a nutshell. It should not have happened.

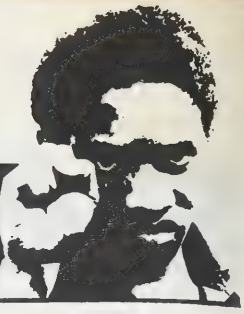
We come unhesitatingly to our verdict.

Dear Race Today,

Ian McDonald must have misunderstood our letter in your last issue. None of the attitudes or ideas, which he so eloquently attacks in his article, can be found in our letter.



BACKLASH



That is of minor concern, compared to the fact that by misrepresenting what we are doing and the points made in our letter, he is confusing the issues.

You have also confused the issues and misled your readers by our summary of the Black Parents Movement's case. In your summary, you state that the Black Parents Movement rejects 'the practice which stems from the widely held belief that lawyers know best and that defendants are passive partners in the court scene'. We also reject that practice. What the Black Parents Movement in fact said was that 'not anywhere is there such a thing as a good solicitor' and that therefore, you should use them as little as possible, i.e. as a post box. We said that such an attitude was negative and destructive and that there are a few solicitors who will not treat the client as a passive object or collude with the agencies of the state.

Ian has used our letter as an excuse for a general sounding off which could easily be mistaken for political posturing. We had hoped that our letter would be the starting point of a useful discussion.

The Black Parents Movement's original article did not deal with the manner in which a case is presented in court but with its preparation. We replied on the same basis. We agree entirely with Ian about presentation.Nothing we said in our letter implied that, in preparing a case to the highest standards, one has to treat the defendant as a 'passive victim'. Or, by ensuring that witnesses are properly interviewed, and as far as possible consistent in their evidence, the style of advocacy is one of 'deferential boot licking'.

Nowhere do we suggest that defence committees should 'trespass on the lawyer's territory'. Quite the reverse. We suggested those defence committees should do two things: take an active part in ensuring that solicitors do their jobs properly and coordinating strategy.

We stated what the objects of fighting a case were — to minimise the damage to the defendant and maximise any political advantage that may be derived. If that was not what was achieved in the Mangrove case - what was ? And how was that achieved ? Not only by showing how strong and powerful the defendants and their supporters were, but by showing that the agents of the state were racists and liars. And how was that done ? By having a case that was thoroughly prepared, making full use of the expert help and advice available and having that case presented in court by professional experts like Ian.

'Traditional lawyers cake' ?
Whose slice ?
Do you wanna swap, Ian ?

Ole Hansen
Gavin McKenzie

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REVIEWS

ROOTS

Roots
By Alex Haley
Hutchinson. Price £5.95.

Alex Haley's *Roots* established an immediate literary success. It has dwarfed all television dramatisations. Overpassing literature, it extends the historical consciousness of the American people and of the whole world.

The television series demanded eight successive performances — exceeding all preceding numbers with 130 million viewers. There is no end to discussions of all aspects of *Roots.*

Such claims demand solid foundation. In 1750, in Juffure, a village four days up-river of the West African coast, Kunta Kinte was born. Captured in 1767, he made the middle passage. His attempts to escape cost him half a foot, but slowly he accepted slave life. He married and fathered a daughter, but he never lost consciousness of his Africanness.

His African name and certain African words, passed on to his family, were preserved during six generations until they drew the attention of Haley, already a collaborator in that remarkable book, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X.* Tirelessly, Haley sought and found that the African words betokened a tribe in Gambia.

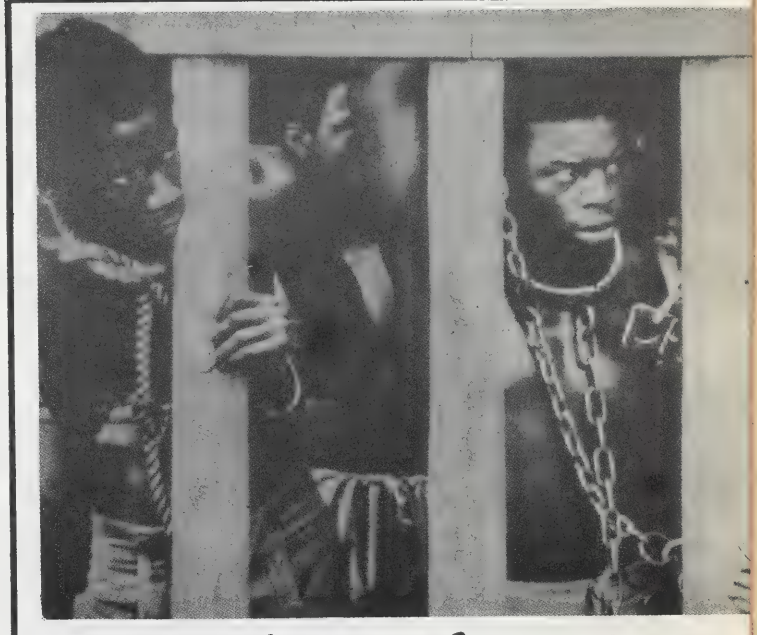
Relentlessly researching, he miraculously found the ship which had brought Kunta Kinte, now renamed Toby, and also the family which had bought him. Haley set out for Juffure in Gambia and there met an African historian.

For centuries, African tribes have had historians, griots. Usually a member of a particular family from childhood, he is taught tribal history by his father and in turn teaches his own son. This griot could tell Haley the precise facts about Kunta Kinte and also of Kunta's ancestors.

A most convincing section of the book is the life of Kunta, his parents and his village. This can only be a careful accumulation of information, lacking the irregularities and surprises of actual life, but it is very carefully done and leaves the reader with an impeccable conviction of the high state of civilization in Juffure. Take marriage.

> "Since childhood, had each of them always demonstrated a good home training. Had either of them ever caused undue trouble to anyone, including their own families? Had either of them ever displayed undesirable tendencies of any kind, such as cheating or telling less than the full truth? Was the girl known for being irritable and argumentative? Was the man known for beating goats unmercifully? If so, the marriage was refused, for it was believed that such a person might pass these traits along to his or her children.

The pressures which forced Kunta and his family into slave realities are obviously a literary problem



To the Black Community in Britain, Through RACE TODAY, warmest of wishes from the family of Kunta Kinte!

Alex Haley

involving cruelties, rapes, composite characters, the War of Independence, the Civil War. The historical background, necessarily done in snatches, is not very convincing but the life of the slave, in 1977, is particularly germane.

> 'White folks ain't got no secrets,' the fiddler said to Kunta. 'Dey's swamped deyselves wid niggers. Ain't much dey do, hardly nowheres dey go it ain't niggers listenin'. If dey eatin' an' talkin', nigger gal servin' 'em actin' dumber'n she is, 'memberin' eve'y word she hear. Even when white folks gits so scared dey starts spellin' out words, if any niggers roun', well, plenty house niggers ain't long repeatin' it letter for letter to de nearest nigger what can spell an' piece together what was said. I mean dem niggers don' sleep 'fore dey knows what dem white folks was talkin' 'bout.'

Kunta's daughter is sold South, raped by her master and produces a son, whereupon, this astonishing book enters an entirely new dimension. A poor white neighbour is a fanatical breeder and competitor of gamecock fighting. The boy's skill makes him this man's close assistant and, almost a partner in this gamecock business. The fortunes of Chicken-George, his patron, his mother, his friends and his marriage all constitute what reads both as reality and as imaginative fiction of high quality.

Mr Haley ends by showing the whole family (Chicken-George included) going to Tennessee, where in time they produce offspring who, by ability, luck and white benevolence gain education above the average, Haley being one of these.

The film is not up to the standard of the book. For example, it portrays the miseries of blacks after the civil war and nowhere is there a single lynching. There was no need to horrify the spectator with the barbarous act, but some characters could have expressed their anger at the news that yet another lynching had taken place. Yet for scores of millions of Americans, the film is and will continue to be a source of education and understanding of an important phase of American civilization.

Passages in this book go beyond race and deeply into history and personality. When the dancing women recognise who Haley is they place each child successively into his arms. It took an expert to tell Haley, "you didn't know you were participating in one of the oldest ceremonies of mankind, . . . they were telling you, 'Through this flesh, which is us, we are you and you are us' ".

From the instant I read that, until this very moment, I felt that had I been there, intently watching, the women would have handed the babies to me also.

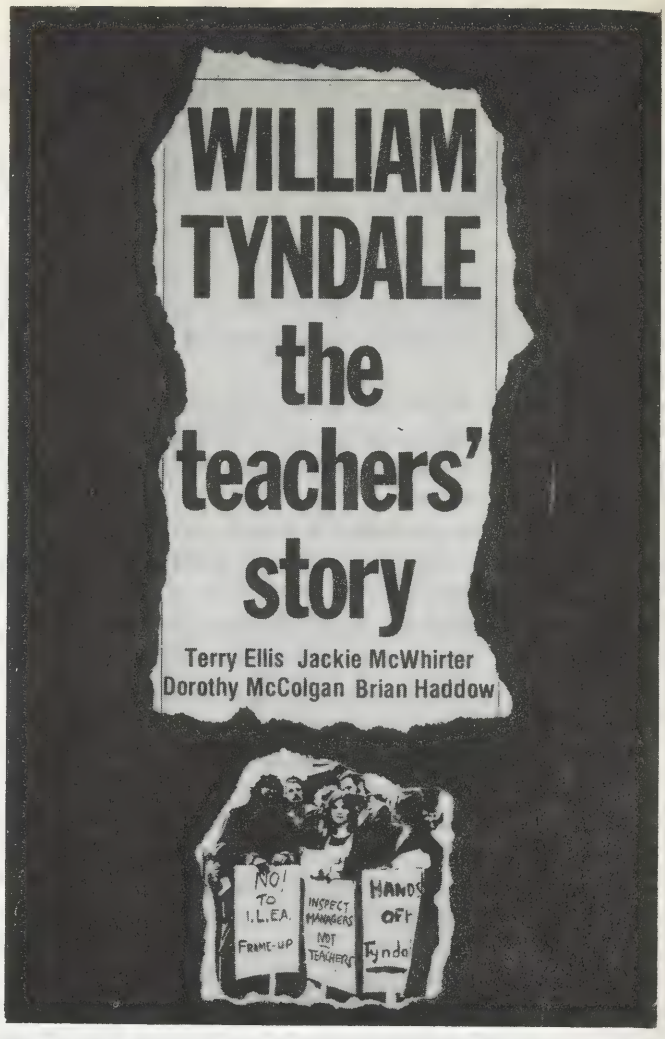
C L R James
Reprinted from Caribbean Contact

William Tyndale – The Teachers' Story
by Terry Ellis, Jackie McWhirter, Dorothy McColgan, Brian Haddow
Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative
£1.00 paperback.

The case of William Tyndale, as presented in the public inquiry into the William Tyndale Junior School, or as presented here by the principal victims of the political intrigue, is indeed a tangled web.

In writing their own story, the headmaster, Terry Ellis, and his three colleagues, have given us a partial insight into the forces that operated on the curriculum, the management and the organisation of the school in which they worked.

Today, the teachers are suspended but not sentenced yet. The Inner London Education Authority, which followed up the public inquiry with disciplinary proceedings against the teachers, has pronounced them guilty of indiscipline on several counts and will, in the unspecified future, let them know whether they are to be dismissed, reinstated or moved sideways to other schools.



But the story first: In the words of the Auld Report which was published as a result of the inquiry, "between late 1973 and the autumn of 1975, William Tyndale Junior School in Islington was beset with troubles and conflicts that caused great damage to it and to William Tyndale Infants School which is housed in the same building".

The Teachers' Story tells how Mr Ellis was appointed to the headship of the school, how the school changed its methods of organisation, its curriculum, its philosophy of schooling under his headship, with the democratic cooperation of most of the teachers who worked there.

It traces the activities and intrigues initiated against this philosophy and this method of work by one Dolly Walker, a part-time teacher at the school, and links her opinions and intrigues to the actions of the managers of the school and to the Islington Labour Party who were finally instrumental in bringing charges against the teachers and bringing the school to a standstill.

It is a plausible story of a conflict of opinion that turned into a conspiracy of powers acting on the school, and emerged finally as a controversy over the purpose and practice of schooling in Britain. And yet, despite the thousands of words that have been written about Tyndale in the press, in the public inquiry reports, in the educational journals, at the heart of the political storm remains a mystery.

The teachers at the school have been accused of in-

discipline because they went on strike in support of their wage claims, but then thousands of teachers in London did the same. They have been accused of desiring the overthrow of society through the indoctrination of children, but no such allegation has stood up to scrutiny. Their book itself seems to say that such an aim is unrealistic.

The teachers have themselves presented their case in terms of a conflict of educational philosophies. They claim that their curriculum and methods were based on "options and human values", that "one of the important aspects of [their] philosophy related to children suffering social deprivation and a lack of self-confidence, casualties that inner-city stress is producing in ever-increasing measure".

The groups and individuals who opposed the Tyndale teachers had no single coherent policy, but were nevertheless united in their machinations against the teacher's 'cooperative'. Mrs Walker, who circulated, with the help of managers and of Rhodes Boyson, the Tory spokesman on education, a 'black paper', accused the Ellis' teacher team of "seducing the children to behave in ways which are detrimental to them". She accused them of letting academic standards slip, of giving the pupils of the school 'free choice' in their learning activities, of allowing the borders between work and play to be blurred, of getting away from the monkey-training techniques of rewards and punishments to socialise the pupil population of the school.

At the inquiry, almost all the complaints of 'bad behaviour' were levelled against the black pupils of the school. Ellis' team was arraigned for paying too much individual attention to the blacks. The steel band of the school, a central part of its music curriculum, was criticised in a school inspector's report for taking up "valuable time ostensibly intended for skills learning".

The political battle that destroyed the school was, at first, fought through an attempt to enlist the support of parents against Ellis and his team. The teachers counter-attacked several times by attempting to explain the rationale behind their methods, curriculum and organisation to the parents and putting before them the fact that Tyndale did not have lower standards of literacy or numeracy than the average London school.

The story is presented as a case history of the victimisation of the Tyndale teacher team, and though the book leaves us with the impression that deep and divergent philosophies of education were the issue, the events prove that at the heart of the storm was the fact of pupil attitudes and pupil behaviour.

The philosophies that came into conflict are quite simply methods of dealing with pupil resistance to discipline and routines. The philosophies of education didn't produce the pupil's behaviour and attitudes, it was their behaviour and reluctance which produced the philosophies. When teachers are honest about that single fact, they can begin to seek the understanding and support of parents. The Tyndale story proves that without these, the forces ranged against a school which seeks to liberate pupil power in any sense, can and will defeat a curriculum based on ideals.

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The following back issues of *Race Today* are still available from our office at 40p each including postage.

1976

January: India: Tyranny and Resistance; Busing in Ealing; 30 Families Join East End Campaign

February: Forward MPLA; Don't Stop the Carnival; Free Desmond Trotter; Bhuiya Committed for Trial; A Working Class Party in Trinago

March: How The American Government Subverted The Black Panther Party — The FBI Revelations; "We Did Not Come Alive in Britain"; Housing Struggle: The Tiger is on the Loose

April: Jamaica: A Challenge From the Right; The Road Make to Walk on Carnival Day; Affray: A Police Weapon; Attack on Bengalis; Trotter Reprieved; Republic in Trinidad & Tobago

May: The Stylistics of Millwall; Defend Manningham; Carnival as Usual; The Right to Decent Housing

June: Special Issue — No Retreat from the East End; Assaults on Asians; What the Home Secretary knew all Along; On Patrol; Southall: New Passions, New Forces; Origins of the Conflict; Interview with an Immigration Officer; Reviewing the Press

July/August: Up Against the Police; We can Fight for Better Housing and Win; Compulsory Sterilisation: Indian Government Eliminates Non-Producers;

September: Carnival Belongs to us; Remember, Remember The 5th of November — The Bonfire Night Case

October: Black Parents on the Move; Carnival 76': What the BBC did not Say; Meeting the GLC; Dissent in India

November: We Are in the Majority at Fords; Elections in Trinidad & Tobago; The Bonus Struggle in India; Bonfire Night in Chapeltown, Leeds: Back on the Streets in '77; Trotter Defence Committee Banned; Guyana: Dayclean Under Attack

December/January: Heavy Manners - Jamaica at the Crossroads; Parents and Youth Against 'Sus'; Asians and the Police

February 1977: Elections in India — The Ballot and the Bullet; Carnival '77: The Threat is from Within; Up Against the Lawyers/My disagreement is total and fundamental — Ian McDonald;Bogle Attacked; Manley in the Saddle; Dread Fred interviews Linton Kwesi Johnson

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LIBERTARIAN EDUCATION 21

The 21st issue of *Libertarian Education* has just been published — marking the 10th year of the magazine's existence.

Features in the new-style, typeset journal include a look at the idea of 'professionalism' and teaching, what it's like to be a homosexual teacher, a piece on paedophilia (sexual relations between adults and children), an account by a teacher who was forced to leave the Leicestershire 'progressive' show-piece school of Countesthorpe College. Also the usual information digest, reviews, comments and letters.

Copies can be obtained direct from, Libertarian Education, 6 Beaconsfield Road, Leicester.
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MUST NOT BE ANOTHER CHILE

— After the December elections,
— the way forward for the Jamaican working class.

A pamphlet by Paul Sharpe and Paul Gordon.

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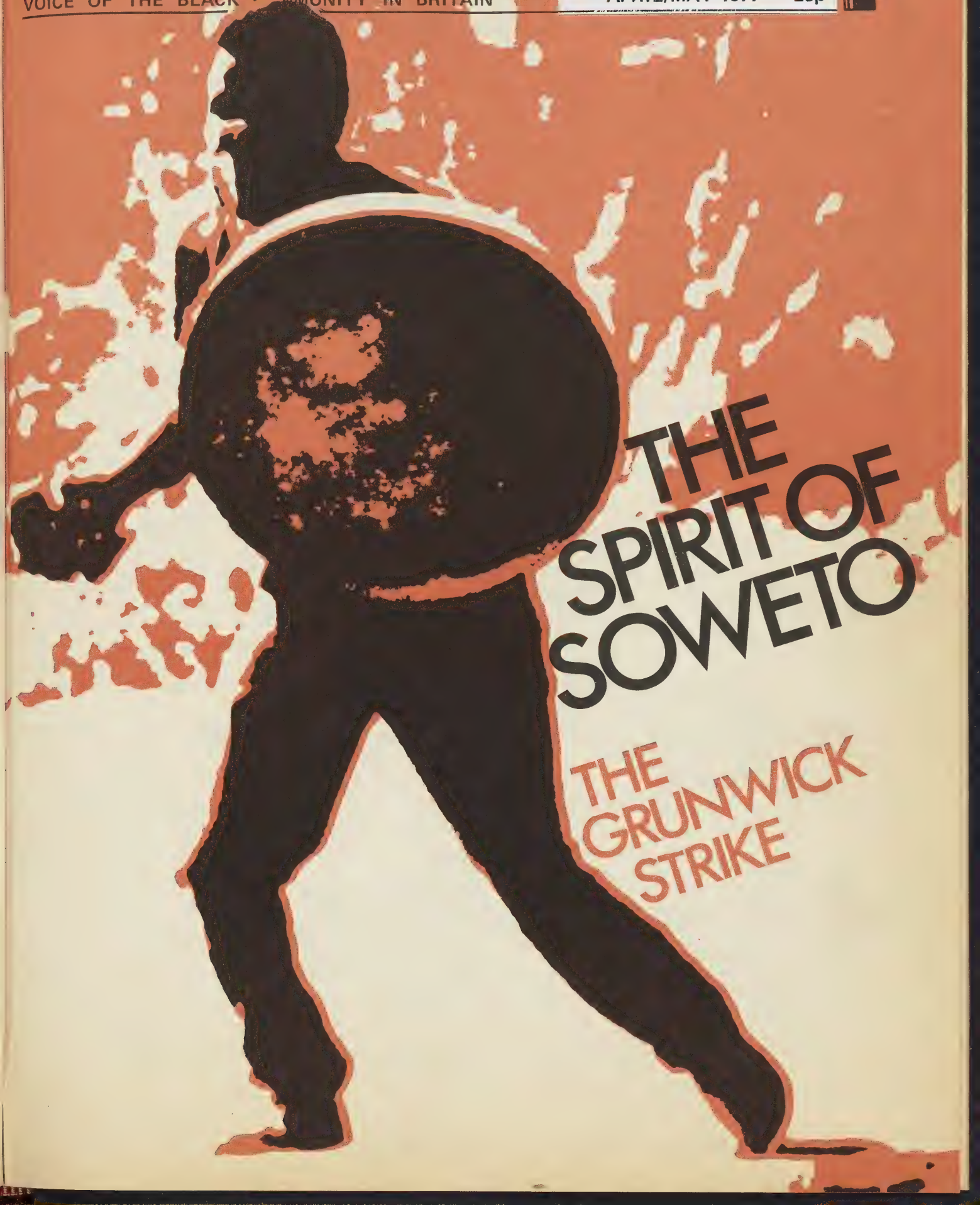
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Race Today

VOICE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY IN BRITAIN

APRIL/MAY 1977 25p



THE SPIRIT OF SOWETO

THE GRUNWICK STRIKE

LETTERS

Dear Race Today,

We would like to draw the attention of your readers to the existence of this Centre, just opposite the entrance to H.M. Prison, Pentonville. We are a voluntary organisation which offers refreshments, play facilities and other amenities to the families and other visitors of prisoners; we also provide an advice and referral service when desired.

We have been in existence now for over five years but we have noticed, over the past year, a considerable increase in the number of visitors to people remanded in custody waiting deportation, and it seems to us that we could offer some help and support to their visitors.

In the past, convicted men have been able to notify their visitors of our existence by placing one of our cards in their letters and visiting orders, but men awaiting trial or deportation do not need to send V.O.'s and may well be unaware of our existence.

I enclose copies of our recent Annual Report, our cards and posters for your information. I would be pleased to provide you with further information if you wish.

Yours sincerely,
Diana Butt,
Visitors Centre Pentonville
2A Brewery Road,
London N.7.
Tel. 609-1258

To The Rt. Hon. Brynmor John,
Minister of State,
The Home Office,
Whitehall, SW1A 2AP.

Dear Mr John,

May I bring to your attention the fact that on March 29, there were a series of racist daubings in South London. My front door was daubed in red paint 'race mixer' as were the headquarters of the community Relations Councils in Croydon and Merton, together with the homes of the Lambeth Community Relations Officer and the former Chairman of Croydon CRC.

The daubers left a paper in my mail, published by the New Christian Crusade Church, called *Christian Vanguard* their address being, Post Box 214, Metaire, LA7 0004. The local Member of Parliament Mr Bruce Douglas-Mann and the MP for Streatham, Mr William J. M. Shelton have been contacted by me as well as the local police. I understand the local police have contacted A7 at Scotland Yard.

This paper contains anti-semitic and anti-black articles as well as advertising the book by Streicher, the notorious Nazi.

I have been in touch with the Board of Deputies of British Jews and they have told me that a lot of material published by this group is being brought into Britain and is being used by fascist organisations for distribution. They feel that the link between the National Party and this organisation needs careful examination.

I certainly feel that efforts should be made to ban the importation of this journal into Britain and seek prosecution under the 1976 Race Relations Act for those who distribute it. The support that American Fascist and Racist organisations are giving and will give to similar organisations in Britain is I consider something which demands most careful scrutiny.

I would be very obliged to receive your comments and suggestions for further action on this matter.

Yours sincerely,
C. Power.

Dear Race Today,

This is the most important of a long series of cases in Wolverhampton in which the police are accused of racial discrimination against coloured people and particularly coloured youth.

The facts are that on August 20, five plain clothes policemen were detailed to attend the Bowling Alley, Birmingham Road, to "find the culprits" on complaints made by white youths. The black youth claims that a plain clothes man threw beer over him and a fight erupted. The police claimed that the youths started it. Police officers were injured.

We are raising a number of questions concerning this case with Wolverhampton MPs.

1. Why were these youths, none of them over 16 at the time of the offence, refused bail each time they were remanded and kept in custody for almost seven months before the trial began in February? Since the police claimed that bail should not be allowed in order that they could pursue their enquiries, can we now be told retrospectively what enquiries were made and what justification there was for holding the youths in custody.

2. Why were only black youths arrested when, according to the police, the fracas involved white youth as well?

3. What pressure was brought on two of the seven black lads to change their plea to Guilty of Affray if the police "left on the file" the charge of assaulting police officers? Especially as later on in the trial the judge requested the withdrawal of the Affray charge for the remainder of the accused.

4. Why were these seven juveniles of 15 and 16 years questioned by the police in the absence of their parents?

5. Were the police guilty of perjury when they claimed that Fritz Jackson started the fight when Jackson himself claimed that beer was thrown over him and the police hit him and this was confirmed by his girl friend despite the fact that the latter two had no opportunity to collude since Jackson was taken away immediately

6. Will the Home Secretary call for the papers in this case to decide whether irregularities of procedure occurred.

Three of the accused were given Borstal training (for six months to two years). The two who changed their plea were sent to a detention centre. One was fined £200 and one was found not guilty.

(Dr) George Barnsby, Secretary,
Wolverhampton Communist Party,
141 Henwood Road, Wolverhampton.
April 1977.

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EDITORIAL

FORWARD TO A COMMAND COUNCIL

The signs are that we are in for a repeat of last year's pattern of racist attacks against members of the Asian community.

In 1976 we identified an increase in physical assaults during the late spring months; an increase which intensified over the summer.

Already, the beatings, the knifings, the kickings are on the increase. A few days ago, a young Asian, on his way home from work in London's East End, almost had his ear severed from his head by a gang of knife wielding white thugs. The life of another Asian hangs in the balance after he was bludgeoned by racists who broke into his flat. Again, this incident occurred in London's East End which promises to be, like in 1976, a key area in which the pattern repeats itself.

What is to be done? There is no indication that the government and the security forces have placed the protection of Asian lives high on their list of priorities. If they have then it must surely be the best kept secret in the land.

When the government and the security forces identified the Irish community, here in England, as a source of strength and support for the bomb attacks carried out by guerillas in the Irish Liberation Struggle, they took the following steps. They carried out an orchestrated campaign in the press. They followed that by rushing the Prevention of Terrorism Act through Parliament which allowed for the detention of suspects for up to four days at a time. And finally, they mobilised an entire section of the police force in a concentrated attack on the Irish community.

We draw on the mugging issue as yet another example of how the government and security forces take action on a high priority issue.

They identified young West Indians as responsible for carrying out a series of muggings in the South London area. Early in 1975 senior police officers released their version of mugging figures to the press and, in so doing, generated a press campaign which pointed the finger at young blacks as muggers. They mobilised the crack Special Patrol Group of the Metropolitan Police into the South London area and for days a curfew on young blacks existed.

No one dare suggest that like action has been taken or contemplated to deter whites from the yearly, systematic campaign of deadly assaults against the Asian community.

The government refuses to give a lead to the security forces on this question because they fear that drastic action to protect the lives of Asians will lose them support among white voters. That is the long and short of it.

Of course cries of sympathy ooze from liberal consciences whenever incidents of brutality are brought to their notice.

The not-so-liberal engage in mock battles with fascist demonstrators where the opportunity arises.

Firm stances are taken by sections of the media in denouncing the attackers.

All this is well and good and we have no quarrel with the little moral support that comes our way. But to pretend that it deals with the central issue of protecting our lives is the most dangerous nonsense.

We have to protect ourselves. There is no alternative. We have no choice. More to the point, there is a general movement in the Asian community towards self defence.

In each community that general movement must yield a disciplined body of men and women whose sole responsibility has got to be self defence. Here we are not referring to a loose group of some who turn up on one day and not the next. We are not referring to a loose crowd of individuals who accidentally happen to be at the scene of an attack and spontaneously respond. Such assistance helps but is not central to the task in hand.

We emphasise a disciplined body broken up into Active Service Units. At the head of each unit is a Commander linked to other Commanders in a Command Council.

It will be the responsibility of the Command Council to prepare the ranks mentally and physically for the defence of the community.

In deploying the Units, the Command Council must concern itself with the social movements of those whom it sets out to protect and defend.

For example, how many workers in such and such a street or estate work the night shift? What route do they take on their way to and from the factory? What are the hours of worship at the local mosque? How are the devout to be guaranteed safe passage to and from prayers?

The attacks have to be recorded and scanned for a pattern. An Intelligence Unit must seek to find out where in the white community the attackers are based.

The organisation, in part outlined above, will need full-time activists. You can't have a part-time defence force when racists attack on a full-time basis. As a consequence, members of the Active Service Units and members of the Command Council will be faced with a serious disruption in their working lives.

We are in no doubt that the Asian community will readily give financial support for compensating those who volunteer to defend.

In the last few months we have heard a whole range of learned analyses on facism and racism. Ideologues abound. They take the stage, make their speeches, bow out and the attacks continue.

The talking must stop and the action begin.
FOWARD TO A COMMAND COUNCIL.

Race Today Collective April/May 1977

THE GRUNWICK STRIKE

THE TRADES UNIONS FAIL TO DELIVER

In May, the strike of the Asian workers at Grunwick Processing Laboratories and Grunwick Mail Order Ltd in Brent, North London, enters its ninth month. The 250 Asian workers, most of them Gujeratis, picket the gates of Grunwick night and day.

The striking workers have received wide press coverage in their dispute with the management and have gained the verbal support of the Trades Union Congress. Len Murray, head of the TUC, himself walked the picket line mouthing hot air about standing side by side with Asian workers. They have enlisted the favourable verdict of the government's Arbitration and Conciliation Agency (ACAS), and are still no nearer to getting what they want.

The dispute began on August 23, 1976. Grunwick, whose two shop-floors are situated in Brent, one near Dollis Hill tube station, the other near the Rolls Royce factory in Willesden, started life as a film processing laboratory and then took up a profitable line of mail order work. They deal in such items as cameras, radios, photo-albums, cassettes. . . etc.

In both the mail order house and in the film proces-



sing laboratory, the director, Anglo-Indian George Ward, and his company employ a 99 per cent black labour force. The management is all white. Amongst the workers the management has a reputation for severe bullying of the work force. Twice in the last four years the firm has expelled workers whom they suspect of attempting to organise the work force into trades unions.

The present flare-up occurred in the mail order department when two young Asians, who were sorting mail trays, were ordered by Mr Malcolm Olden, one of the management team, to sort the trays in one hour. This job usually takes four hours to complete.

The workers in question say that he was less than polite in his order and, in protest, they resorted to clearing the trays and re-mixing the mail they had sorted, starting all over again with the mixed trays.

One of the workers, Chandu, was summoned to the office. The manager in charge began to swear at him. Chandu picked up the manager's table and threatened to overturn it. The manager told him he was sacked. "I don't want to work here anyway," Chandu said, and with five of the other workers in his department staged a walk-out.

On the same day, Mrs Desai, now the treasurer of the strike committee, was asked to put in several hours of compulsory overtime after she'd finished her day's work. She told her manager that her husband didn't want her working late that day, and that together with her son, who worked there temporarily (he's a student), she wanted to leave work to spend Friday evening with her family, instead of staying till ten at night at the factory. Mrs Desai was summoned into the manager's office when she refused overtime and threatened with dismissal. She says that by then she'd reached the end of her tether. She'd worked for the firm for three years and felt she couldn't take the constant bullying, the threatening atmosphere and the pay and conditions "akin to slavery" that the company demanded. She told the manager so and, walking out of the glass box of his office onto the shop floor, addressed the other workers.

"They are taking advantage of us," she said to them, "they treat us like animals here. Just ask yourself why Mr Ward doesn't employ whites here. It's because they wouldn't stand for the pressure they put on us. I for one am not taking it any more. If he says I was sacked and tries to bundle me out by the back door, you can tell him he's a liar. I am walking out in protest, of my own free will."

Her speech was interrupted by members of the management team who asked her to leave the building. In the exchange of words that followed, Sunil Desai, her son, threw his mail tray on the floor and said he was supporting his mother and leaving too.

Outside the factory, Mrs Desai met the five workers who had walked out earlier that afternoon. "They were in a savage mood," she says, "and were planning some sort of retaliation against the management". "I told them that our best bet was to contact someone who knew about worker/management troubles that we had to get ourselves organised and not take any rash steps."

The seven of them decided to go to the Citizens



Advice Bureau in Brent. Mrs Desai's husband, who works in a corporation in the same area, advised them to try and form a union as a first step to getting worker unity. They could force the company, Mr Desai advised, to pay them more than the £25 and £28 for the 35 hour and 40 hour week that they worked.

As they were leaving the factory, Mr Stacey, the personnel manager, who has since resigned his post, was sent out to them. He pleaded with them to come back and sort out their grievances through him. "Where were you when we were being abused and pushed around?" they asked him.

On Monday 26, the small nucleus of seven workers were outside the factory with placards. They talked to the workers as they entered the mail order department and to one worker from the laboratories as he emerged from the tube station at Dollis Hill. They asked the workers to sign a pledge to take united action and decided, collectively, on staging a walk-out from the factory at three o'clock that day. At the appointed hour 150 workers walked out of the mail order firm. They marched to the laboratory and found that the gates had been barred by the management who had got hold of the plan and locked the lab workers in. They had posted the company's permanent squad of toughs outside the lab and convened a meeting of the workers inside to threaten them with consequences if they struck with the crowd outside. The young Asian workers, undeterred by the bottles which the toughs began to hurl, climbed the windows of the laboratory and passed messages to the people inside. Police were called and dispersed the strikers. By Tuesday, 50 per cent of the work force was on strike. Through the Citizens Advice Bureau, the newly formed strike committee had been put in touch with APEX (Association of Professional Executive and Clerical Staff) and with the local Trade Council organiser, Mr Jack Dromey.

An open meeting of the 250 strikers, including most of the Asian students who had taken part-time jobs in the factory, was held that morning. Mr Dromey addressed them and explained to them their rights as workers and their rights of unionisation. They were told to join APEX, and when the union ratified their membership, they were given strike pay from the second week of the action. APEX, they were told, would negotiate their rights to belong to the union and would act as intermediaries between the management and the membership on their grievances.

"Apart from the pay", says Mrs Desai, "which is totally unrealistic, we were treated in that place as though we were bonded labour. The women had to work compulsory overtime or get the sack. The overtime rates were the same as the basic rate for the first six hours, time and a quarter for more and time and a half on Saturdays. People were constantly sacked when they didn't meet the gruelling quota of work. They were never given notice of sackings and only one person, in my experience, ever got paid for the period of notice that management is supposed to give workers. The women were expected to work without a day's sick leave for the first year and, even after that, couldn't get any time off to take their children to a doctor or a hospital, even in cases of emergency. Doctors' certificates were not accepted at that place, they accused you of lying even if a medical practitioner certified that you were away for a good reason. We had to get permission to go to the toilet. It was a sort of rule of terror. They always told us that if we couldn't keep up the pace of production, there were plenty of unemployed workers to take our places. The management used to put up a chart each week of the amount of work that each person had done. It would go up on the notice board to try and threaten workers at the bottom of the list, to make them feel that if they didn't catch up with the others the following week, they would get the sack. Really, in this day and age, the treatment we got was worse than in Roots."

For the first two months of the strike the management refused to negotiate with APEX and its representatives. In September, the firm sent out sacking notices to all those still out on strike. About 130 workers, again all black, had remained behind the factory and still went to work. The strikers estimate that business at Grunwick, though not being at a stand still, was really hard hit. The walk-out and the picketing would effectively cut the daily turnover of £20,000 by over a half. After unsuccessfully trying negotiations with the management, APEX appealed to the machinery of the labour movement to paralyse Grunwick and force the directors to negotiate. For three days in December the postal workers union supported the strike and blacked Grunwick's mail.

George Ward obtained the assistance of the National Association For Freedom and a threatened court case against the blacking of mail ended the three days of solidarity from Tom Jackson and his postal workers. Business at half-cock went on as usual.

Instead of throwing the muscle of the trades unions behind the workers, a move that could be initiated at a stroke by Len Murray and other union leaders who have expressed their support, the machinery of the labour movement opted for calling in the government. The ACAS card was played in December by APEX.

The directors of Grunwick insisted that only the workers remaining in the factory should be balloted to find out if they were in favour of unions. APEX insisted that its members also be balloted and ACAS went ahead and took a poll of the strikers. They were refused access to the workers inside the factory. At the end of May, if the directors haven't reinstated the workers and recognised APEX, they will be taken to court by ACAS. The workers will keep up their 24 hour vigil outside Grunwick. George Ward and his managers will continue to drive their Mercedes and their Jaguars and run their racehorses.

For their part, the directors have told the picketers that they are willing to sit the strike out, they are willing to take on the labour movement as represented by the trades councils, APEX, Len Murray and ACAS. For the strikers eight months has been a long time.

With *Race Today* they discussed the history of the Imperial Typewriters strike and the effectiveness there of an Asian work-force which finally forced the factory's closure and voted against demanding nationalisation. The question they asked was what happens if these powerful people, these trades councils and the TUC cannot deliver?

TRIAL OF THE ISLINGTON EIGHTEEN BEGINS

On April 25, 18 young blacks from North London's black community went on trial at the Old Bailey. The Islington 18, all aged between 14 and 19, face some 20 charges of robbery, theft, and conspiracy to steal from and rob persons unknown.

Most of the conspiracy charges relate to events which occurred at the Notting Hill Carnival in August 1976. The police claim that the 18 were arrested and charged after they had picked up Floyd Willoughby and Denzil Binns on suspicion. Floyd and Denzil were walking through a council estate in North London at the time.It was October 21, 1976.

Under questioning Binns and Willoughby are supposed to have made lengthy statements, not only about their own criminal activity, but about that of their friends and acquaintances as well.

After the police defeat at Notting Hill, a special Carnival squad was set up. They had, at their disposal, hundreds of photographs of young blacks taken by plain clothes detectives at that event. After the arrest of Binns and Willoughby the police swooped on various addresses in North London. They questioned people outside clubs, produced photographs of suspects and detained individuals for questioning for days without access to lawyers, family or friends.

Eighteen were finally charged and, like Binns and Willoughby, all have complained that they were beaten into signing statements admitting guilt and incriminating their friends. All admitted going to Notting Hill Carnival to rob and steal.

The police opposed bail on the grounds that they were dangerous criminals. Eventually, 11 of them were bailed with high sureties.

When the trial began at the Old Bailey, the defence lawyers spoke of the national and international concern around the case and made a successful application that a percentage of the jury be black. 96 challenges were made as jurors were asked,

> 'Were you or any members of your family, or do you know anyone who attended the Carnival at Notting Hill who alleged they were, robbed or stolen from by black youth?'

The final jury consists of five blacks, six men and six women.

The prosecution stated that their case rested entirely on the statements of guilt made by the youth. None of the witnesses they are calling will be able to identify any of the defendants. They will merely state that on such and such a date I was robbed. No witnesses will be called to give evidence on the alleged Carnival offences.

The defence is in the process of submitting to the judge that since statements were obtained by excessive violence and intimidation, they should not be allowed in as evidence. If the judge rules against the submissions and allows the statements in, it is expected that the trial will last for a period of three months.

Support the Islington 18, contact the Defence Committee, c/o Islington Law Centre, 161 Hornsey Road, London, N.7.

The Defendants

Denzil Anthony Binns

Three charges of Theft; Conspiracy to Rob; two charges of Conspiracy to Commit Theft; three charges of Robbery.

Floyd David Willoughby

Four charges of Theft; Conspiracy to Rob; two charges of Conspiracy to Commit Theft; four charges of Robbery.

Hiram Henderson Braithwaite

Four charges of Theft; Conspiracy to Rob; Conspiracy to Commit Theft; two charges of Robbery; Assault with Intent to Rob.

Anthony Frederick

Two charges of Robbery; two charges of Theft; Conspiracy to Rob; Conspiracy to Commit Theft; Assault with Intent to Rob.

Roger Lucien Marsh

Three charges of Robbery; Conspiracy to Rob; Conspiracy to Commit Theft; three charges of Theft.

Calvin Brown

Three charges of Theft; Conspiracy to Rob; Conspiracy to Commit Theft; three charges of Robbery.

Michael Otway

Conspiracy to Rob; two charges of Conspiracy to Commit Theft; Robbery; two charges of Theft.

Conrad Ashade

Two charges of Theft; Conspiracy to Rob; Conspiracy to Commit Theft; Robbery.

Charles Nwanna

Two charges of Theft; Conspiracy to Rob; Conspiracy to Commit Theft; Robbery.

David Terence Willoughby

Conspiracy to Rob; Conspiracy to Commit Theft; Assault with Intent to Rob.

Anthony George Rodney

Conspiracy to Rob; Conspiracy to Commit Theft; Theft; Robbery.

Clive Anthony Whiteley

Conspiracy to Rob; Conspiracy to Commit Theft; Robbery; Theft.

Mark Roger Carter

Conspiracy to Rob; Conspiracy to Commit Theft; two charges of Robbery.

Michael Oliver Mackintosh

Conspiracy to Rob; Conspiracy to Commit Theft; Robbery.

Henderson Leroy Hinds

Conspiracy to Rob; Conspiracy to Commit Theft; two charges of Theft.

Umesh Madhusudan Patel

Conspiracy to Rob; Conspiracy to Commit Theft; Theft.

Desmond Anthony Riley

Conspiracy to Rob; Conspiracy to Commit Theft; Theft.

Alloy St. Louis

Conspiracy to Rob; Conspiracy to Commit Theft; Theft.

REMEMBER Mrs DUNSTER?



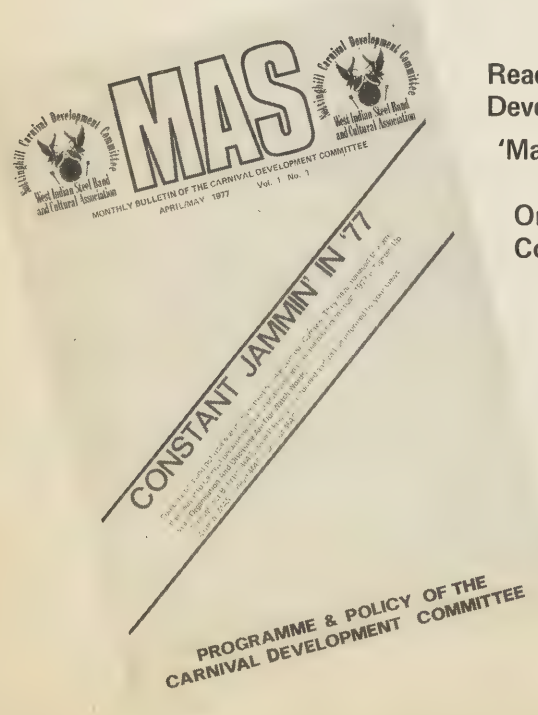
No doubt Mrs Dunster is best forgotten. Readers will, we hope, forgive us for reintroducing her; this time not as the 'irate parent' of a pupil of Kidbrooke school in South London, complaining to the national press about a collection of short stories used by the English department of the school. She was the National Front candidate for Woolwich West in the GLC elections of May 5.

Note that Mrs Dunster, who acknowledges her entire family's keen support for the National Front in her campaign leaflet, has only one claim to fame, a single qualification for asking the electors of Woolwich to put her in public office: she protested against *East End At Your Feet,* written by Farrukh Dhondy (a member of the *Race Today* Collective) and published by Macmillans.

In January this year, ten of her supporters, who told the local newspaper reporters that they hadn't read the book, picketed Kidbrooke school for a morning, leaving when they met with indifference from the staff and ridicule from the pupils. Her protest, of course, did achieve 'national publicity'. The *Daily Telegraph,* the *Evening News* and the *Daily Mail* gave her objections to the stories some prominence. The stories are about Asian teenagers in London.

Each of these newspapers knew, at the time, that the 'protest' was a stunt by members of the National Front. The fact didn't appear in any of the stories they wrote. So much for the objectivity of the national press, and especially for the journalistic credentials of Mr William Deedes, editor of the *Telegraph.* He recently appeared on the television to tell British viewers that his job is to tell the truth about events which involve race.

As for Mrs Dunster and the Front, if objecting to books with blacks in them is their claim to fame and office, they'll have plenty of opportunity in the future. Publishers inform us that teachers are increasingly demanding books reflecting the life and permanence of the black population of Britain. And we know several writers who will begin or continue to deliver.



Read 'Mas' for the full programme and policy of the Carnival Development Committee.

'Mas' is the bulletin of the CDC. It will appear monthly.

Order a copy from Race Today or the Carnival Development Committee.

'Mas' is free. Send a s.a.e. to:
Carnival Development Committee, 53A Colville Gardens, London, W.10. Tel: 01-727 5085 or
Race Today, 74 Shakespeare Road, London, S.E.24. Tel: 01-737 2268.

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Out in four weeks

Articles by Darcus Howe, Editor, 'Race Today', on Carnival - 1974 to 1977

Order your copies from 'Race Today'.

PROGRAMME OF THE CARNIVAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

Carnival in the Grove takes place on August 28 and 29, 1977. The Carnival Development Committee outlines who they are and where they stand.

HOW TO JOIN

a. Any steelbands man/woman, mas man/woman, sounds man/woman can apply for membership in the Carnival Development Committee.

b. Any individual, with a record of positive contribution to the development of Carnival, can apply for membership in the Carnival Development Committee.

c. Any application for membership must be recommended by one or more members of the CDC and can only be approved by the General Council Meeting on the section (a) or (b) where the application is made.

d. The CDC must involve *all* members in the regular carrying out of its activities. Every member has a right and duty to see that condition is fulfilled.

e. Annual membership dues, for the time being, will be £5 a year. This amount must be paid within three (3) months from application for membership.

f. The year shall begin March 31 of each year.

THE LEADERSHIP

a. The following offices exist within the Carnival Development Committee for the term of one year only, ending on March 31 of each year. All office holders will automatically be members of the Management Committee and will submit themselves for re-election by the General Council not later than the second week in April of each year.

1. Chairman
2. Secretary
3. Treasurer
4. Steelband Organiser
5. Costume Organiser
6. Pan Tuners (more than one if necessary)

b. Any member can move at any time that a member holding office be deprived of that responsibility.

c. The Monthly General Council Meeting will establish the procedure as to how each particular complaint will be dealt with and ultimate responsibility for a decision will rest with it alone.

RAISING THE BREAD

The financing of the CDC is the responsibility of its membership. Funds will be raised from membership dues, fund raising activities, relevant government institutions, national and local, charities and trusts, other social organisations, including trade unions.

THE GENERAL COUNCIL

a. The General Council is the supreme body of the Carnival Development Committee and shall meet fortnightly on Saturdays between March 31 and August Bank Holiday; thereafter the General Council fixes dates for its deliberations.

b. The General Council can alter and amend all rules of the organisation by a simple majority.

c. The General Council formulates the programme and policy of the Carnival Development Committee.

d. The General Council elects, at its yearly election, to be convened by the Chairman, all office holders of the Carnival Development Committee.

e. The General Council shall not be convened without a minimum of ten members.

FRIENDS OF CARNIVAL

This is essentially a supporter's club. Any one can join at a yearly membership fee of 50p.

"CONSTANT JAMMIN' IN 1977" – WHAT THE CDC SAYS

The Notting Hill Carnival festival is, perhaps, the largest cultural event held in the United Kingdom. It takes place on August Bank Holiday and will be held, as usual, this year, 1977, on August 28 and 29 on the streets of Notting Hill.

The structure of the event is a simple one. Steelbands and costumed revellers parade the streets; sound systems spin out a web of Caribbean sound



from different locations in the Carnival area; thousands of people make their way to Notting Hill to view, listen to and participate in this range of artistic and cultural display.

The Carnival Development Committee is the body responsible for coordinating the festival.

The Committee liaises with the steelbands, the costumed bands and the sound systems in the months leading to the festival, and during the festival itself.

The Committee liaises with the official bodies – the Council and the police – to secure amenities and bring order to the event.

The Committee liaises with local groups with a view to securing the interest of the local population.

The Committee carries out fund raising activities to finance its work. This is Carnival in a nutshell. There is nothing more to it.

In 1974, the Carnival festival assumed grandiose proportions. Steelbands and Costumed Bands increased in numbers. The artistic quality of the festival improved immensely. From hundreds, the crowds grew to quarter of a million. The festival, from its tentative beginnings, had arrived. It is now a permanent institution in the social and cultural life of the United Kingdom.

This sudden leap in the development of the event has given strength and confidence to those of us who made it possible. No longer are we prepared to be ripped off by hustlers or by those who believe that they can revive their flagging political fortunes on our backs. The growth in the size and quality of the festival has inevitably attracted these types.

In order to rid ourselves of this cancer, once and for all, and to facilitate the healthy development of our festival, we have made the following declaration for 1977 and future carnivals:

"During the last three months, there has been a lot of uncertainty with respect to who is truly representative of organising Carnival 1977 and future Carnivals in Great Britain. We the steelbands men, mas men and sounds men of the Carnival Development Committee wish to inform all that we are responsible for Carnival 1977, for without us there can't be a West Indian Carnival." March 26, 1977.

Signed

Metronomes	Merry Makers	Funland
New Sensation	New World	Twelfth Century
Sukuya	Arawaks	Sunfire
London All Stars	The Brothers	Madame
Old All Stars	Carawaks	Agor-mimba Sugurugu
Ebony	Adventurers	Steel & Skin
Bay 57	Trinbago	Cherry Pickers
Sun People	Lord Sam	Shadow
Spiteri Salsa		

WHERE THE CDC STANDS

NEGOTIATIONS

The major negotiations with which the Carnival Development Committee is preoccupied involve the question of policing, amenities for the festival to be provided by the Kensington & Chelsea Borough Council and the Greater London Council and fund raising.

POLICING

The issue of policing is perhaps the most important question we have to face. Last year, 1976, more than 1,000 police officers were present in the area, as opposed to 60 officers in the preceding year. This was the root cause of the fighting which disrupted last year's event. Leading politicians, journalists, white and black organisations and individuals went on record condemning the high profile adopted by police officers.

The Carnival Development Committee believes that the question of policing is now the single, most important issue arising out of Carnival, and cannot be left to negotiations between us and the police officers.

The CDC demands a meeting with the Home Secretary, at which the issue of policing will be decided. We aim, at such a meeting, to win a low profile policing agreement from the Home Office. That is to say, as few policemen as possible. We see no reason to increase the numbers beyond those of 1975 – 60.

We aim to keep the public informed on the different stages of negotiations with the Home Office and their representatives.

COUNCIL NEGOTIATIONS

Carnival is held within the Borough of Kensington & Chelsea, the participants and spectators come to Notting Hill from different areas in London.

The Carnival Development Committee holds the view that, consequently, both the local council and the GLC are responsible for providing amenities from the rates we pay to these bodies. We aim to win from the authorities facilities for stalls, toilet facilities and the construction of the viewing bleachers.

FUND RAISING NEGOTIATIONS

The principle has been long established in the United Kingdom that the state subsidises the Arts. In practice, subsidies go to the theatre, the ballet, the opera and a whole range of cultural and artistic activities.

The CDC takes the position that Carnival is not a junior partner in this. On crowd response alone, we are the senior partners in the artistic and cultural field. And what other measure is there?

The CDC has no intention of compromising our fundamental declaration just for the sake of funds.

The CDC undertakes to publish a full set of audited accounts at the end of our financial year, and to this end we have appointed an auditor.

Nottinghill Carnival Development Committee
West Indian Steel Band and Cultural Association

THE SPIRIT OF SOWETO



The revolutionary mass uprising of urban Africans in the African townships of South Africa, last year, was instigated and led by school children. Beginning in Soweto, in June 1976, throughout the days, weeks and months ahead, parents and other sections of the African labour force, united under the leadership of their school children and students, to inflict the most violent, uncompromising blows ever on the Vorster regime.

The anniversary of Soweto is approaching. Below, *Race Today* has reproduced a speech made in November, 1976, to the Assembly of the International University Exchange Fund, in Geneva, by Ranwedzi Nengwekhulu, of the Black Consciousness Movement. In it, he shows why the uprising began with school children, why they began in Soweto, and he shows that the growth of independent, black, revolutionary organisations in South Africa was the crucial factor. He traces this growth from the period when he was involved, as a student, in organisations with whites.

Although the Black Consciousness Movement is supposed to be responsible for what is going on in the country, it is not responsible in the sense that it organised the students to do what they have been doing. It has been responsible in the sense that it has popularised the whole idea of black consciousness around the country, mainly through the South African Students' Organisation (SASO), the Black Peoples' Convention (BPC) and the South African Students' Movement (SASM).

One could say that it started almost spontaneously, in the sense that people have been fed up with the situation in the country for a long time, but one thing we have always suffered from, being South African blacks, is a lack of ideology around which people could rally in order to fight for some kind of ideals. I think another element, which has been emphasized just recently with these uprisings, is that the hero of black politics is now to be found in the adult and youth level.

Since the inception of the African National Congress (ANC) in 1914, and I believe even before, blacks had always thought that, because they are a product of an artificial society, created by the so-called multiracial universities and schools, that it was both possible, and perhaps even essential, to bring about change in South Africa by negotiating with a colonial power.

Essentially, what we are dealing with in South Africa is a colonial situation. Our colonialists are now resident, which gives the impression to outsiders that we are dealing with people who are genuine South Africans. I think they are not; they might live in South Africa, but they are not South Africans. Between 1946 and 1960, the whole intention of blacks was to drive some sense of logic into the whites so that they would change their system. I think we were working on the assumption that the system was a product of a mistake on the part of the whites rather than a deliberately formulated policy to keep us where we were and where we still are at the moment. We tried to drive some sense and logic into a system that has its own logic and, therefore, we achieved nothing.

I think that the ANC Youth League pushed hard on the old leadership to convince them to understand that there was no sense in trying to reason with these people. Although not as radical as it is at the moment, the intention was to move away from the politics of negotiation with their old master, from a position of powerlessness. With the arrival of the Pan African Congress (PAC), the struggle was pushed ahead in terms of militancy, but I think it was the birth of the Black Consciousness Movement which brought a really new political complexion to the whole scene, because the point of departure was that you could not really talk about liberation with your own master.

We do not doubt that there are sincere whites in the white community who want to see change brought about by peaceful or any other means in South Africa, but we doubt whether it would be possible for us to try to seek out all those sincere whites and to bring them into the fold. Our point of departure has been that we go it alone and we do not expect to receive our liberation "on a silver plate". The new kind of perspective of politicised blacks in South Africa is, that we have nothing to do with the people who think they are a master race, who hold the monopoly on truth, who can decide on our future and our direction to the extent of deciding with whom we shall stay, with whom we shall have sex and how many children we shall have.

THE YOUTH MOVEMENT

I think the significant aspect about what one can call the June 16 uprising is, that it came not from the university students who could perhaps intellectualise, having read books about Marx and Mao, but from high school and primary school

children. Since they were born they have never known any other system – only the pretence that if you studied at Wits or Cape Town together with whites, something would change; although when you left the university, you would have to go back to Soweto, so there was not really any change at all. They were the children who were brought up under a system which taught them the geography of their own Bantustans, the history of their own forefathers, who were made out to be barbaric. So they know no other kind of history or geography other than the one they were supposed to be confined in. Furthermore, they are the ones who grew up at the time when the Black Consciousness Movement and its ideology almost pervaded the entire country, unlike my generation. We were a kind of schizophrenic student body, because our first political involvement was with non-racial organisations or racial organisations. I personally was involved with the National Union of South African Students (NUSAS), until we realised that we were looking at the problem from different perspectives. When they were talking about book shops, we were talking about liberation and, when they were talking about limitation of movement, we could not even talk about that because we had no movement at all. When we talked about a Pass, they could only intellectualise about it because they had never carried one. Therefore, although we are the forefathers of the Black Consciousness Movement, at least part of our political development has derived from the approach that we have to sit down and negotiate and work with those elements from the enemy camp who you think are on your side. The students coming up now, however, are the products of the Black Consciousness Movement.

WHY SOWETO?

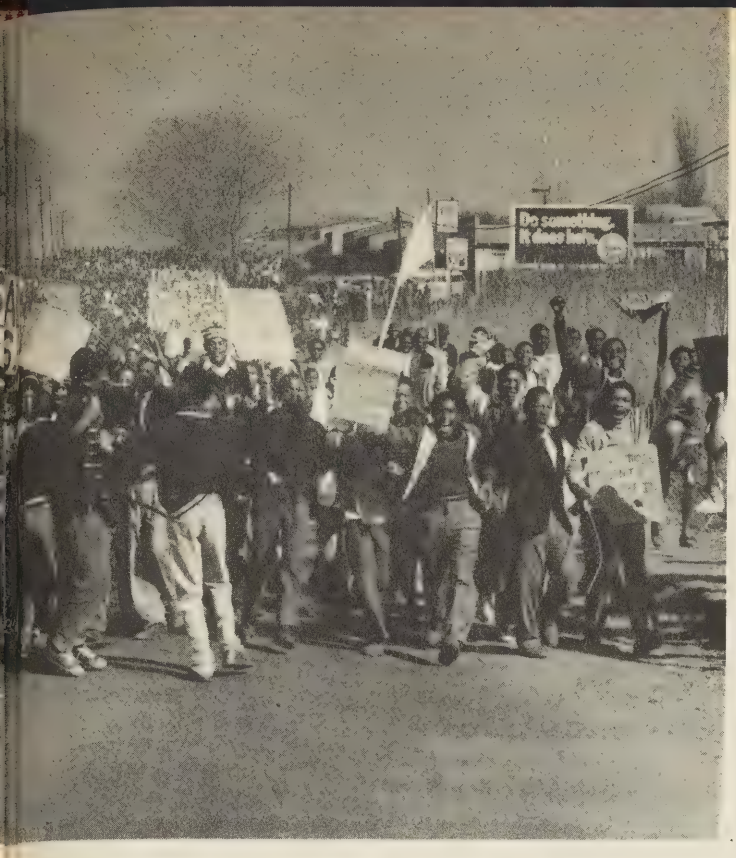
Why did the uprisings start in Soweto and not in Cape Town, or in Durban, as happened in 1970, when the workers in Durban struck? Why not in the rural areas? The head office of SASO is in Durban, so that, in 1970, they were able to keep in touch with the workers quite easily. It started in Soweto this time because that is where SASM has its head office. SASM has been in existence for about three years now and is predominently centred in Soweto. The kind of leadership which is running it there is more radical than the leadership throughout the whole country. Thus, the uprising started in Soweto, not because those pupils were more oppressed there, but because SASM was centred there. The BPC head office is also in Soweto and could provide the kind of information there that they could not provide us with in the rest of the country. They could meet people and address meetings, so it was easier for them to communicate to the people. I think that is essentially why it started in Soweto. The question of Afrikaans was not very significant. If so, it would have started in Durban where Afrikaans is hated more than in the Transvaal and in Cape Town. The reverse was the case because of the political awareness.





One must also remember that the Black Consciousness Movement had managed to raise the degree of political awareness even if, as in some cases, it was the kind of political awareness we do not want, in the sense that people might be involved in Bantustan politics. But today it is no longer as it was when we started.

After Sharpeville, nobody wanted to talk about politics, because people were afraid of Robben



Camera Press



Camera Press

Island. The police needed to do very little to intimidate people. When you talked about politics your parents would say that you would finish up on Robben Island. So that, the intention of the regime, at that time, was to try to perpetuate this fear that pervaded the whole country. So that, between 1960 and 1968, when we started, there was no politics at all. We had a very difficult time convincing people that there was nothing wrong in forming organisations which opposed the Bantustans. They were afraid. Now, after June 16, the degree of political awareness has developed to such an extent that even eight year olds understand what you mean by politics. Six or eight year old children in South Africa appreciate the meaning of the word "system" when it is used to describe the whole range of the white oppressive system, with immediate reference to the police. Adults who were afraid to participate in politics in Soweto, because of the number of people who have been killed, have now realised that it does not really matter whether you fight or not, the regime still kills you. They accept that it is better to die fighting than just to be killed in your own house.

There are a number of examples which can be used to illustrate that at least people do understand now. One of the things, that used to worry us for quite some time, was the number of bottle stores in Soweto. You have more bottle stores than clinics and more police stations than clinics. Every railway station—and in Soweto you have more than 20 railway stations—has a bottle store. When our parents leave work with their pay, which is very meagre, they immediately buy liquor and then they go home without money. The father leaves for work at 4 in the morning without having seen his family, and the following day, he is afraid to face the family because he has left nothing in the house. But since June 16, bottle stores no longer function, because the first targets were bottle stores. Even people who were alcoholics found the courage to destroy the institution they knew was destroying them.

One could sum up by saying that, it is not so much the oppression which led to the present uprising. It has always been with us, since 1652, when the first colonialists landed in South Africa. What led to the uprising is the level of political awareness which has been reached, mainly by the children.

I think the activities in the surrounding countries, particularly in Angola and Mozambique, had a very great influence. South Africa was engaged with UNITA and, when they lost, the blacks felt that it was their victory together with the MPLA. Also, the prospect of Zimbabwe becoming free, has tended to increase the hopes of the people that we too can become free. Mozambique, becoming independent through the determination of the people has also given the people added incentive.

The present crisis has become, as never before, almost permanent. One can no longer foresee a situation where things will be normal as in the pre-June period. There will never again be a situation where whites can arrogantly go into black areas and intimidate them. I think that they can go in with guns, but they will never be able to round up 200 natives at a time, as has been done before. I think the people realise that it is no longer advisable to pick up stones and throw them. It will now need some kind of planning. Hence the campaign to try to stop blacks from celebrating Christmas and sending cards. A whole year of mourning will

be declared, with shops closing at midday. We will also try to plan an effective system of "stay-at-home". The children have realised that one should not stay at home permanently. Staying at home for three days as a start, was just a way to determine the sort of support they could raise. Previously when it was suggested to stay at home for the whole week, nobody did so. Now, when the students say that one must stay at home, all are obliged to do so, because they literally make their own road blocks and, the police know, it is impossible to cross these road blocks. It has become very difficult for a parent to argue with a child who comes to him or her saying, "please stay at home for three days in sympathy with my friend who has been killed, or my brother who died today". This was a very important element in convincing people to stay at home. As there are no examinations taking place, there will be problems again next year, as once you take a decision not to participate in the education provided, you miss the examinations and then you are forced to miss a year. Therefore, after this year, children will see no reason to continue with their education because of the year they will have missed.

Another element, that has now entered South Africa, is the realisation of the blacks that they have to get up and fight. It may not be possible to do so because they cannot obtain arms in the country, but I think the regime now knows that these feelings exist. We will not obtain our freedom "on a silver plate", but people have decided that we have to fight for our rights. We will not negotiate any more. I cannot see the government being able to negotiate any more with people from the Black Consciousness Movement because they will refuse to do so – unless another Kissinger comes along and forces people to do so, but I can't see any prospects of that happening. It is only whites, who can redeem the situation by voting themselves out of power, which is very unlikely.

ORGANISATIONAL PROBLEM

Finally, I would like to touch on the chances of SASO, BPC and SASM continuing to exist. The regime is not likely to ban them because they are afraid of the reaction. I do not think it would make any difference now, anyway, if they did ban them. I do not think we would stand to lose anything. We can form another SASO tomorrow—it is easy to do and we have done this in the past. The likelihood is, that they will not ban the organisations, but they will continue to ban and detain its leadership, hoping that in the long run, the movements will just die out. I think that approach might be wrong. It is no longer, as it was in the past when a person had been banned, a question of asking someone to come forward to offer themselves for the leadership. Now, when someone is banned, another person is prepared to stand up and take over the same position . The only problem we face at the moment is to train experienced leadership for administration. The prospect of movements continuing to exist are very bright. They are still functioning now, although in a very difficult situation, because the authorities keep on pouncing on everybody who comes up. If they ban organisations, we might form another one, or we might decide not to, because I think SASO and BPC have achieved what we set out to achieve within the framework of the South African situation.

We can go beyond ideology. If we want to take up arms we will have to decide to opt out of the legal system within which we are now operating. I think our idea is that we should continue as we are, because even if we have armed struggle, we would need a viable movement within the country. The question of politicising the people and trying to orient them will not end with the armed struggle. Nor will it end after the armed struggle. The liberation movement will continue, and so we have to maintain, as far as possible, the existing organisations and promote them and reinforce them.



Camera Press

BACKLASH



ROOTS

THOSE OF US WHO HAVE SEEN 'ROOTS' HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY. HERE IT IS.

Roots told us about our black history. Our ancestors were slaves. Kunta Kinte was one of the slaves. The slave takers were white and they named Kunta Kinte, Toby to show he belonged to them. He tried to run away from the plantation in America but the slave takers caught him and chopped off his foot. The programme made me feel that I was taken to be whipped, and so I was glad that other slaves escaped.

Darcus Beese
Aged 7

I have known about slavery for a long time, but watching Roots has made me more subjective towards the slavery of black people.

It hit me very personally. It was like Kunta Kinte was my own brother. Roots upset me very much, in fact it upset me so much that after the first episode I felt so emotional about it that I didn't even want to watch it with my friend.

I find it difficult to write about this, because I feel that my feelings are very personal. I found that after the second episode of Roots their lives became too idyllic. It seemed like the makers of the film were more concerned with it appealing to people than telling the truth.

Tamara Howe
Aged 11

At 8 pm on April 8, I sat eagerly in front of the television to watch the first episode of the adaptation of Alex Haley's Roots. I watched with pride. For the first time I was seeing a well produced, well presented programme on a period in black American history including black actors and actresses. The feeling of pride gradually changed to frustration, anger and an urge for vengeance on behalf of the slaves.

When Kunta Kinte was captured and chained, he was allowed to scream and fight the air and the chains until his energy was spent — such anger and frustration, the violation of the women and young girls by the crew of the slave ship transporting them from Africa to America: They were used as 'belly warmers'. The degradation and shame that was felt by all when they were branded and sold like cattle. A strong quest for vengeance is revived.

Roots was getting too emotional for me. Even though I thought it was well made, the actors and actresses holding their parts well, I did not want all these emotional feelings. I could not continue to watch the fighting spirit suffocated in those blacks and the defeat that they suffered all the time. For his rebellion, Kunta's liberty of movement was taken away when the slave owners chopped half his foot off.

Despite the all-American work of glossiness, Roots is an excellent historical production giving blacks and whites, young and old, a vivid picture of a period in black American history — a period that has only been briefly touched on in their school history books.

Lorine Burt

Roots has made me, as well as other people, more conscious of the historical background of black people outside Africa. Because of the good film production, it has made the horrors of slavery seem more realistic and easier to visualise than when read in books.

Recently, radio phone-in programmes have been flooded with calls from listeners who believe that programmes, such as Roots, do not help us to live in racial 'harmony', as it would cause resentment amongst black people, especially the youth. Whether it does or not, the series is historical fact; racial resentment already exists on both sides, and any result will be, in my opinion, merely a backlash.

Shirley Sylvester

Roots gives a broad idea of what slavery was really about. I don't think the film shows the worst things that used to happen in slavery e.g. mass murders and torturing of black people. Still, it shows some aspects of slavery which still have a great effect on the audience.

Continually, throughout the series, there is shown a kind slave ship captain, or a kind slave plantation owner, who is supposed to be sympathetic towards the slaves. Even so, the system is upheld. This gives a general idea that there were a lot of kind masters. This is wrong as slavery went on for 400 years.

There are certain parts in the film that I think would only relate to the black audience. For example, the scene where Kunta Kinte, as a young boy, first arrives on the plantation where he meets Fiddler. Fiddler, at the beginning, tells Kunta that there are certain things he must not do, as they would both be in serious trouble. But Kunta, a warrior as he is, defies this law. Sometimes, Fiddler beats Kunta for this, telling him he must conform to the master's rule. This scene, I think, would appear to the majority of a white audience as if Fiddler is the smart slave because he does what master tells him, and that Kunta is stupid because he is rebellious and does not do what the master tells him. But

ROOTS

to the black audience they would relate to it in a different way, thinking that Fiddler has to act in the way he does to stay alive, and they see the same situation happening in this so-called modern society e.g. in the job circle, but in a different way.

On the whole I think the film gives a narrow aspect about what slavery was really about, but it shows clearly how we were taken from Africa, and robbed of our language and our culture.

Keith La Rose

BBC Television has been showing a film (Roots) for the last few days. The film is based on the life of the blacks enslaved by the whites. This is a story of harrowing suffering of the innocent black people. I believe the story is true. The film lashes the conscience of every one who watches it. Innocent working people have been enslaved, used and oppressed by the imperialists throughout the history of mankind. Roots has unfolded a few pages of a phase of history. The whites have deprived the blacks of their dignity as human beings. I hope all other viewers will agree with me on this point.

Rafiqul Islam
London E1

I have been living in this country for the last seven years. I am a cinema goer. I've watched a lot of films on TV. I am fond of Bengali, Hindi and English films.

Recently, I watched a wonderful film on TV. Its title was Roots. The film has moved me. I watched the film from part 1 to part 4. The story of this film is unique. It has agitated my mind. How cruel man can be to his fellow beings in this world! The rose gives us fragrance. But if it is crushed we can neither enjoy its fragrance nor its beauty. The same is true about man.

Western nations have exploited and oppressed innocent, helpless people all over the world. Roots has graphically presented this truth. Every one wants freedom. Nobody wants slavery. Western nations enslaved innumerable people in the past. Roots has truthfully depicted the story of slavery, exploitation and oppression.

Mukhtar Khan
London E1

The magnetic TV serial, Roots by Alex Haley, has enthralled audiences of all colours.

Haley traced his ancestors from America back to a small village in Gambia. For this Haley was attacked in the press by a *Sunday Times* reporter who tried to cast doubts on the authenticity of the book.



NEWS ON CAMERA

Out of slavery to a BBC epic at Easter

Kunta Kinte arrives in America, chained and caged on the Annapolis waterfront. One of a cargo of "Choice Healthy Slaves", as a newspaper advert agreement put it.

By Peter Atkinson

Remarkable

The TV film, which is an adaptation of the book Roots, was well directed and acted. There was an abundance of artistic expression. The actors played their parts with a degree of sensitivity and emotion which was prominent throughout the film.

The film was however not what I had expected. The presentation and script was rather glossy; the well groomed plantations and quaint bed-sit type huts for the well kept slaves, owned by patronisingly liberal massas who had the interest of their slaves at heart.

The slaves may have been treated with a degree of liberalism by their masters for a number of reasons, such as fear of slave rebellions, fired by the growing consciousness amongst slaves, or, possibly, because of the overhanging threat from Northern Abolitionists, which I doubt.

I regarded the press reports as insignificant. The importance of Roots is Haley's contribution to black literature in the furtherance of the development of black consciousness and culture.

The reasons for the liberalism of the masters should have been made clear. It is to be remembered that the gulf between blacks and whites was immense. The slaves were believed to be amoral, inferior animals born to carry the white man's burdens and were treated as such.

I was expecting the film to portray the harsher brutalities of slavery — bad living quarters, poor food and clothing, anguish and frustration, born out of the failure of the slaves to totally control their situation.

However, Roots was enjoyable and is unique in the sense that it is the first film of its kind.

Fay Chang

In February I was in New York during that week when ABC-TV broadcast the television version of Alex Haley's *Roots*. In April I was in London for the BBC re-run.

The response of both press and public in the US was phenomenal: For eight days running, millions of viewers contributed to the second-largest

television audience in history for a non-news event (ABC's screening of *Gone With the Wind* last fall is first).

Simultaneously, local papers and TV stations ran different series on related topics, ranging from potted histories of other ethnics (Jews, Irish, Italians, etc.), to stories about blacks who have adopted Haley's methods, tracing their families back to slavery and beyond, to panel discussions about black history.

Roots was good television by American standards, but the interest it generated came from something more.

British reviewers seemed, by comparison, to be unimpressed and to want to go out of their way to play down the whole series. I found this disturbing, not because they were critical, but because criticisms focused on aspects that were entirely secondary and often specious. The celebrated *Sunday Times* expose was actually quite irrelevant to Haley's essential message. Jill Tweedy commented in the *Guardian* that only men are interested in their ancestors because ours is a patrilineal society; in fact, Haley traces his lineage through both males and females, starting with his grandmother, and part of the importance of his research was his doing so under conditions where family names had been destroyed completely.

British reviews were replete with smug self-assurances that such a nasty business as slavery and racism may be a burning problem in the American South but we're above all that here.

The televising of Roots was possible because of a change that has been forced on America over the last 15 years, and this change has been especially dramatic in the South.

The fascination Americans have for our origins doesn't stem from our "lack of history" or any subconscious desire to feel linked to "more civilised" societies, as many Europeans believe, but rather, I think, from ours being a culture which has often thought of itself as international, both in its origins (our ancestors came from everywhere), and in its (imperial) aspirations. But black Americans were always the exception. Our white ancestors migrated more or less of their free will; our black ancestors clearly didn't. The popularity of Roots symbolises the recognition of this fact, and the acceptance of the pedigree of black Americans.

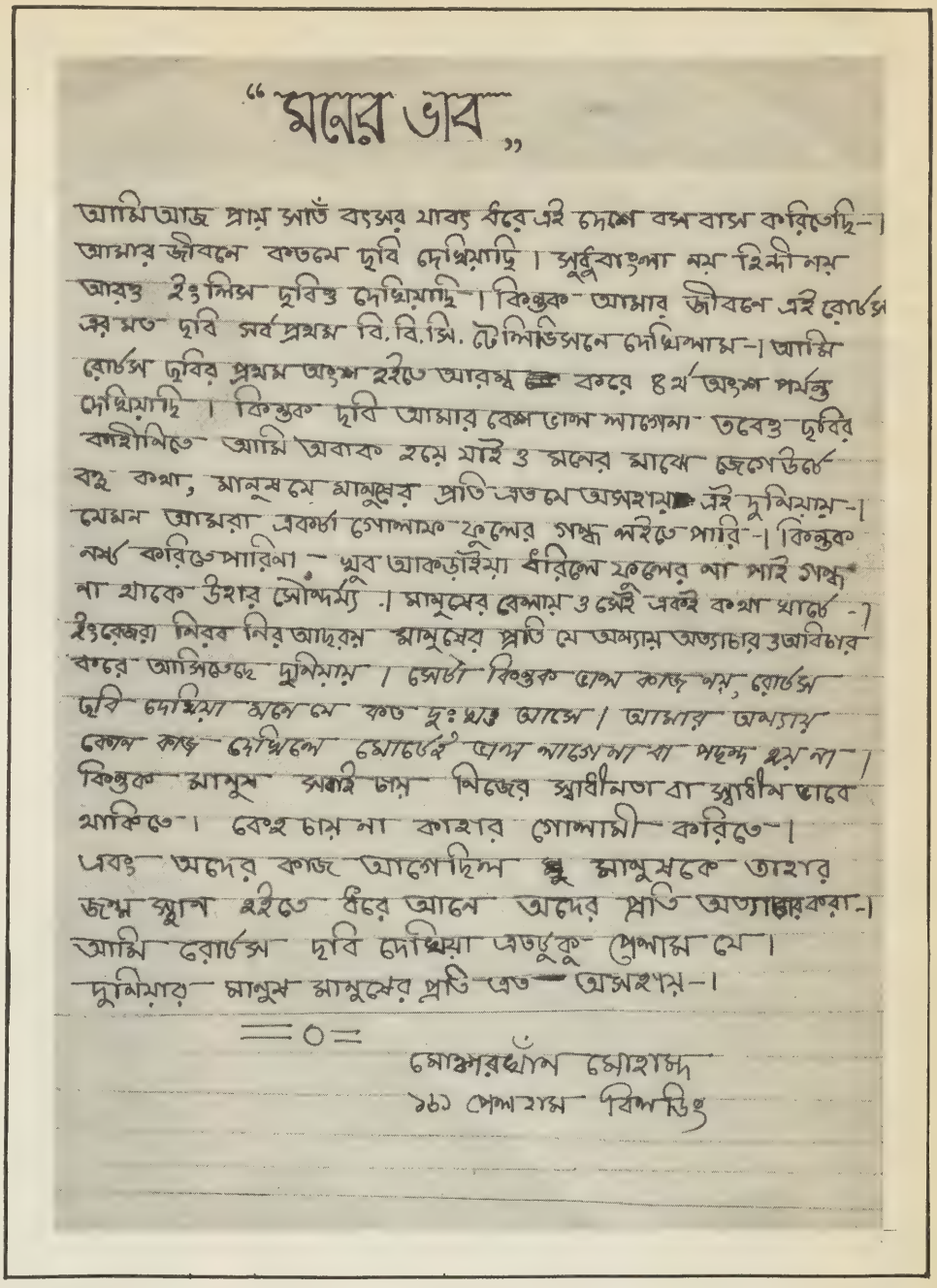
Now, this can be seen in different ways. It could, for example, be called a co-optation of former black militancy. ABC did water down the story in a number of ways: The sub-title of the book was changed for television from "The saga of an American family" to "The triumph of an American family". The series, unlike the book, ends in the 1870's when the family moves to Tennessee and becomes 'free' at last, neglecting to mention that the struggle has continued for another century.

Publishers have been pushing copies of Roots but not Haley's earlier *Autobiography of Malcolm X.* On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that a programme like Roots would not have appeared on television ten years ago. It isn't just that the networks would have found the material too 'sensitive' and likely to 'offend' some viewers. Ten years ago there were not the black actors of the calibre we have today. The research that laid the ground for Haley's work had not been done, and, most of all, the political struggles which forced the television industry to employ and depict black Americans had not taken place.

If the significance of Roots eluded the British, it was, I suspect, because they wished to blind themselves to it. There has been an equivalent treatment of the Carter presidency, for example. Jimmy Carter's ascendance does not represent the capture of power by a quaint Southern politician of the old school — such relics are on their way out; rather, it represents the incorporation of a previously excluded region into the mainstream because that region has been transformed.

The shift toward incorporation of black Americans into the mainstream culture may or may not benefit in the long run. White Americans, especially Northern liberals, indulged in a fit of pious self-flagellation about historical guilt when Roots was running. It isn't clear what good this did, but at least they responded. In Britain the natives are restless, impervious, and, it seems, spoiling for the kind of fight in which America has begun to capitulate.

Fritz Efaw.



"মনের ভাব"

আমি আজ প্রায় আট বৎসর যাবৎ ধরে এই দেশে বসবাস করিতেছি। আমার জীবনে কতগুলি ছবি দেখিয়াছি। সুধু বাংলা নয় হিন্দী নয় আরও ইংলিস ছবিও দেখিয়াছি। কিন্তুক আমার জীবনে এই রোটস এর মত ছবি সর্বপ্রথম বি.বি.সি. টেলিভিসনে দেখিয়াম। আমি রোটস ছবির প্রথম অংশ হইতে আরম্ভ করে ৪র্থ অংশ পর্যন্ত দেখিয়াছি। কিন্তুক ছবি আমার কেমন ভাল লাগেনা। তবেও ছবির কাহীনিতে আমি অবাক হয়ে যাই ও মনের মাঝে জেগে উঠে বহু কথা, মানুষে মানুষের প্রতি এত অসহায়। এই দুনিয়ায়। যেমন আমরা এবর্ষা গোলাপ ফুলের গন্ধ লইতে পারি। কিন্তুক নষ্ট করিতে পারিনা। খুব আকড়াইয়া ধরিলে ফুলের না পাই গন্ধ না থাকে উহার সৌন্দর্য্য। মানুষের বেলায় ও সেই একই কথা খাটে। ইংরেজরা নিরব নির আদরন মানুষের প্রতি যে অন্যায় অত্যাচার ও অবিচার করে আসিতেছে দুনিয়ায়। সেটা কিন্তুক ভাল কাজ নয়, রোটস ছবি দেখিয়া মনে মনে কত দুঃখ পাই। আমার অন্যায় কেহ কাজ দেখিলে মোটেই ভাল লাগেনা বা পছন্দ হয় না। কিন্তুক মানুষ সবাই চায় নিজের স্বাধীনতা বা স্বাধীন ভাবে থাকিতে। কেহ চায় না কাহার গোলামী করিতে। এবং অদের কাজ আগেছিল সুধু মানুষকে তাহার জন্ম স্থান হইতে ধরে আনে অদের প্রতি অত্যাচার করা। আমি রোটস ছবি দেখিয়া এতটুকু শিখলাম যে। দুনিয়ার মানুষ মানুষের প্রতি এত অসহায়।

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মোক্তারহোসেন মোহাম্মদ
১৬১ পেনহাম রিসডিড

EAST END NOTES

By Mala Dhondy, Race Today Collective

WHAT IS RACISM?

THE BENGALI EXPERIENCE IN THE EAST END

AN OPEN LETTER TO PAUL BEASLEY

Dear Mr Beasley,

Some members of our organisation were invited to an Anti-Racist meeting on April 14 at Toynbee Hall. The meeting was organised by the East London Campaign Against Racism, and you were one of the speakers.

We were interested to hear what you had to say on an anti-racist platform, because our experience of Tower Hamlets Council, of which you are the leader, is that it has persistently attacked Asian people living in the East End of London. Here are a few points to illustrate what we mean.

1. Some 50 of our members presently live in Varden Street, E.1., a street of houses about to be sold to your Council by the London Hospital. As our members have spent, between them, several thousand pounds in making the houses habitable and have nowhere else to go we wrote to your Council last year asking for a meeting to discuss the situation. Your reply was, 'we don't talk to squatters'. What you meant of course was that you don't talk to *Asian* squatters. (As you well know, you have not only talked to white squatters groups, you have, in the past, leased properties to them as well.) However, we responded by picketing the Town Hall in Bethnal Green, 300 strong. We sat down in the street and demanded that you meet us. You agreed.

2. The meeting with your Council was not fruitful. We pointed out that your system of allocating housing in the borough discriminated ruthlessly against Asian families. We told you that whereas white families are housed after being on your waiting list for two or three years, some of our members had been on that same waiting list for eight years. We also pointed out that you have always allocated sub-standard housing to those Asian families that you do eventually offer accommodation to. Flats on estates which white families refuse to accept or in areas which are unsafe for Asians to live in. We said that this situation needed to be reviewed. You listened but, in the end, took the position that our "allegations were unfounded" and that no change of policy was possible.

3. Next, you told the London Hospital that you would only buy the houses in Varden Street if you get 'vacant possession'. In effect, what you asked the London Hospital to do was throw us out of our homes. The Hospital, eager to push the deal through, instructed the LEB to cut off the supplies of electricity to the street. When it became clear that we would not be intimidated into leaving, they reversed their decision. And although the Hospital withdrew from the fight, it cost our members in Varden Street £875 to get the supplies on again.

4. Recently, you have used your so called Environmental Health Department to harass us in yet another way. Some of their inspectors called at two houses in Varden Street. They decided that the houses were in 'multiple occupation', which they were not. The fines and legal expenses arising out of those two cases will cost us in the region of £250 – No attempt was made to find out who the people in those houses were; if they were visitors; if they were living there on a permanent basis or if they were there as guests for a few days; only the racist assumption that all of us sleep ten to a room.

Yet, that same Health Department when we reported a broken sewer at Pelham Buildings, Woodseer Street, a building also occupied by our members, said, and we quote, "they didn't have toilets in the jungle, why do they want them here?" We eventually spent £50 – of our own money in fixing the broken sewer pipe.

5. It seems you are also collecting information for the Inland Revenue. A Mr Cormack, again from your Health Department, called at Pelham Buildings last week. He said, in conversation with one of our members, that a Tower Hamlet Councillor wanted a report on Pelham Buildings because he had heard that the folk were overcrowded and that people were using sewing machines and not paying tax on their earnings. Who was the Councillor? Was it you, Mr Beasley? Are you worried about people living in overcrowded conditions because you want to re-house them? We doubt it. Your record shows quite the opposite. And why is your Council so concerned about how much tax is paid by people who earn 30 or 40p an hour? That, incidentally, is how much out-workers earn in the rag trade, when there's enough work to go around.

Knowing all this, we were surprised to hear you say at that meeting that racism has to be combated, first of all, in "our own back yard". You said, ". . . we must put our own house in order first". What hypocrisy!

Last year, in East London, there were hundreds of attacks on Asians. The police stood by while assaults took place on a daily basis. In response to this, we in the Asian community organised to defend ourselves.

Through this entire process, the Labour Party and the Council (and in this area, the two are the same) remained silent. Now, however, you say that you are 'concerned'. You say the time has come to "actively oppose racism". You say the labour movement must rally to the defence of Asians. Would it not be more accurate to say that you are concerned about the increasing defection of Labour votes to the Tories and the National Front?

We believe, Councillor Beasley, that your appearance on that platform was mere opportunism. A cynical exercise in Asian vote-catching. Nothing more

EAST END NOTES

By Mala Dhondy, Race Today Collective

You seem to distinguish between the racists who attack us on the street and those who attack us in other ways. As far as we are concerned, it is only a difference in degree.

If you genuinely want to adopt an anti-racist policy, you could for instance repay our organisation the £1170 – your racism has cost us in the last few months. You could get your officials off our backs and begin tackling, instead, the problem of homelessness as it confronts us in Varden Street and Nelson Street, and as it confronts hundreds of Asian families in East London. Where, Councillor Beasley, do you intend to begin? In your 'own back yard', as you put it, or on an election platform?

Signed: **Bengali Housing Action Group**
Varden Street Collective.

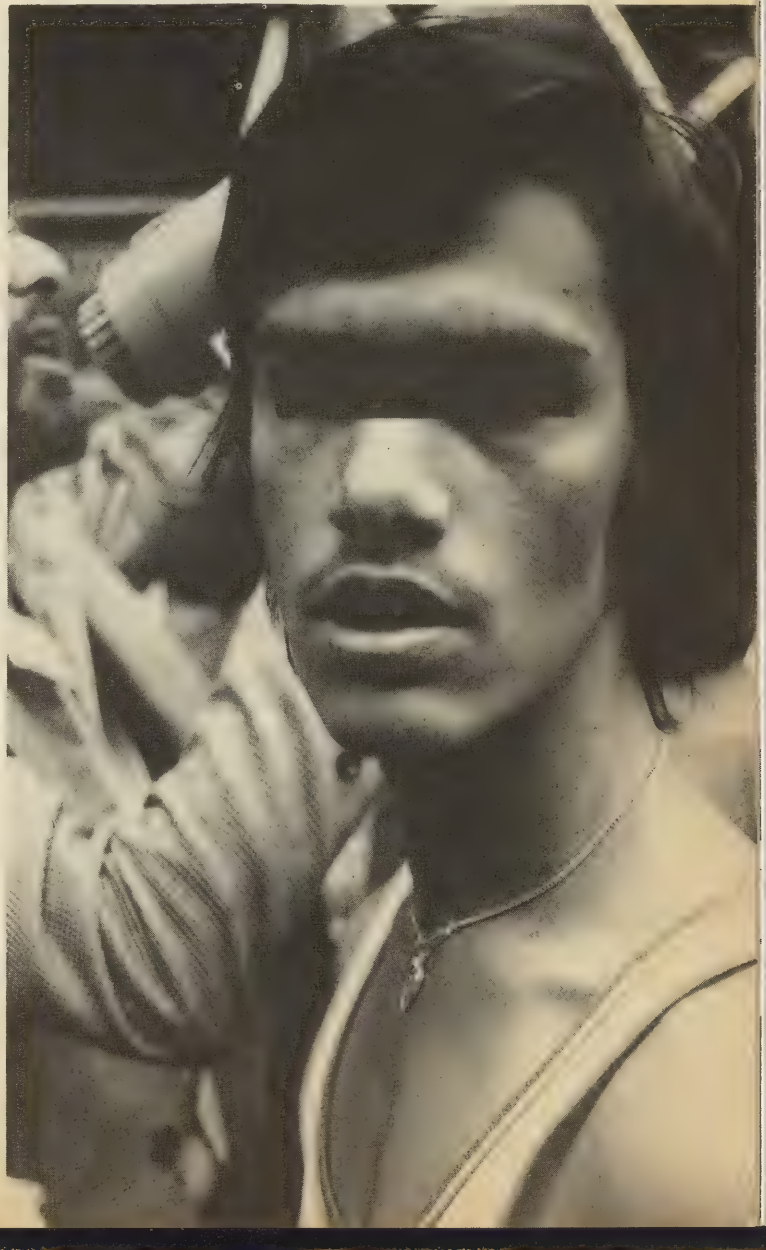


FACING THE ASIAN YOUTH

If one is handed a leaflet advertising an Asian youth conference, you expect a debate between Asian youth. One does not, for instance, attend a women's conference to listen to a lot of men talking. The "One-Day Conference of Bangladeshi Youth", held recently in the East End of London, was, at best, political comedy and, at worst, political cheek. It was organised by the Federation of Bangladeshi Associations and the Asian Centre in Islington.

The organisers distinguished themselves by completely excluding the youth from their platform. The agenda listed "four speakers from the youth". As it turned out, they were hastily hand-picked at the last minute and pushed forward to say a few words. A young boy, about 13, spoke falteringly about the sad plight of old age pensioners; an experience as far removed from his own as it is possible to choose.

The youth who filtered into the hall, mostly from in and around the Brick Lane area, came to the meeting in a hostile mood. They came, they said, to see what was being said in their name, determined to challenge it. And they did. The conference had barely begun when a young Bengali, from the local



EAST END NOTES

By Mala Dhondy, Race Today Collective



Bangladesh Youth Association, stood up and criticised the way in which the conference had been organised. "We were not consulted", he said in Bengali. "This thing has nothing to do with us. You've only come down here because you want to control us – you want us to follow you."

"No", protested the chairman, a Mr Rasul from the CRC in Sheffield, "we want to start a dialogue with young people in our communities".

"Why, then, did you tell us that we could only speak from the platform if we talked about the things you wanted us to talk about?"

Unabashed, the elders, all of them professional community relations wallahs, proceeded. They had brought with them Mr David Lane, recently appointed chairman designate of the Commission for Racial Equality.

Mr Lane could not restore confidence in the platform. He talked about the difficult task that the police face in the area and the co-operation they needed from young people in the community. He too was challenged from the floor. "Our experience of the police in East London is that they actively support the racists who attack us." "You must, of course, complain", he ventured, "if that is what you feel". "Complain to whom?" he was asked. "To the officer in charge of the particular station", he replied. By now the stage was set for open conflict between the platform and the floor.

At five o'clock, as the conference was about to end, the youth were back in force in the audience, having left and re-entered the hall noisily, several times over during the afternoon session. One of them stood up. "Now that you people have all had your say, can we say what we think?" "There is very little time", said the chairman glancing at the clock, "please restrict yourself to questions directed at the platform, we have no time for anything else now". Another youth jumped to his feet. "I have something to say." "Is it a question", asked the chairman. "No. I don't want to ask you anything, I want to tell you some things." The chairman tried to stop him amid cries of "Let him speak". The youth was finally allowed to speak. It was a tirade against the organisers. "You think you can come here from all over the place in your posh cars and organise us. You think I'm stupid because I'm only a machinist, but I can tell you a few things about this area. . ." People got up to leave at this point. Another organiser, Mrs Jehan, stood up in the middle of the confusion and, in an attempt to cool it all down, started thanking the organisers, the speakers and the catering staff who made lunch possible. The whole thing, by now, had become quite ridiculous. People were laughing and talking loudly as they left the hall, and Mrs Jehan, the first Bengali woman to be appointed to the Commission for Racial Equality, was left thumping the table and calling for order.

The media were there in force. Television cameras, an interview from Radio London and another from Capital Radio. They were able to capture the conflict but, in reporting, watered it down considerably. The most 'radical' of them, the man from Capital Radio, came to the conclusion that the problem is the 'generation gap'. The BBC television programme was less pretentious. It restricted itself to extracts from Mr Lane's speech and left out the response from the youth.

REVIEWS

The Asian Youth Festival '77
Held at The Royal Albert Hall, April 15th 1977.



Even four years ago there would have been a sense of improbability about it, but in 1977, the second Asian Youth Festival, held in the Albert Hall, London, was a matter-of-fact success. From Asian communities all over the country, groups of young people came to sing and dance and celebrate a collective, changing 'Asianness'. The titles on the programme still had something of the bizarre about them: Kamala Kanthan from Bromley, Jugnu Bhangra from Gravesend, not the names of performers, but the names of folk art songs and dances from Bengal and Gujerat.

The performers young Asians amateurs of all ages from seven to 25, displayed enthusiasm and confidence. Gone was the nostalgic value of the Asian jamboree of the sixties, gone the spirit of official determination which kept alive, in the past, the sense of belonging to another country. Gravesend will have its Bhangra and Leicester its cross-fire of Asian pop, and like it.

On April 15, the Albert Hall was as packed as it is for the proms. A racially mixed audience, as loyal to their regional or local troupe as the inhabitants of Fulham to Chelsea Football Club, had gathered from all over the country. The generation of Asians, which decisively intervened in the Asian summer of '76, on the streets of Southall and Spitalfields, put its second best foot forward on the stage. They brought to each other the activity of the parochial community hall in Blackburn or Wellingborough or Glasgow.

No Asian festival can avoid the repeated performances, with variations of style and choreography, of the Punjabi Bhangra folk dance or the Gujerati Garba dance. The Apsaras (and nymphs they were) from Wellingborough divided themselves into a memory of Gujerat, a memory of Punjab and a whole-hearted salute to British telly and the future. Three groups of girls danced the Garba, the Bhangra and then, a la Pan's People, a go-go. Surprise of the evening, the music changed to Sugar Sugar, Honey Honey and the Garba troupe, garbed in Gujerati veils and ghagras (skirts) swung into action. Then Punjabi folk-steps and motions to American disco funk, and a symbolic interweaving of their diverse cultural roots. Smiles from the girls and whistles from the audience.

The three pop groups from Leicester achieved something that it will take Bombay band-leaders two years to catch up with. They sung Hindi pop with aggressive competitiveness, all the trappings of Procol Harum and all the 'nakhra' and hintingly sensuous style of Indian film stars. Into Indian pop they had integrated the bongo and African drums, the traditional American drum set and the tabla. The harmonium and the electric organ soothed melodies together behind the remarkable voice of Jayanti, clad in a black gown, wetting her lips for song as deliciously as Mick Jagger has ever done.

When the turban of one of the young performers in the Bhangra dance of the Uplands School, Leicester, fell off, the audience realised that the flaxen haired nine year old was a white boy, one of two in the group of eight. It seemed to prove, when he grinned and pranced on, that Leicester, despite its reputation of being the National Front stronghold of Britain, has been forced into taking its multi-culturalism seriously enough to make it a day-to-day, rather than a self-conscious, activity in its schools.

The Festival was brought together by the National Association of Asian Youth which was set up to

"involve the community, and Asians in particular, at local and national levels in the development, performance and appreciation of their art, music and culture". The Community Arts projects, through which the NAAY works, have the financial backing of the Arts Council of Great Britain and the Gulbenkian Foundation. The festival was put together by an Indian actor, Roshan Seth, and by the organising secretary, Ravi Jain.

A point to both of them, arising from the programme: Singing and dancing are a start. The one attempt at drama, a monologue by Ashok Pancholi, was badly received by the hecklers in the audience who were impatient to see more dancing and listen to more of their pop creations. Nevertheless, in the Asian communities up and down the country, there exist drama groups whose plays and video films attempt important commentaries on the life of Asian communities in Britain. They must be seen. Song and dance can say what we are for and how we are evolving. Drama can say what we are fighting against and how we are doing it. *Race Today* looks forward to an Asian Drama Festival.

From the nods of appreciation of the West Indians in the audience one could see that the Asian Youth Festival was not to be as robust as Carnival, but certainly as well-wrought as the steelband performances that have become a national feature here, as confident as reggae. Personally, this reviewer didn't understand the Punjabi songs, but knew they were being interpreted by those who followed the lyrics of struggle and hope, in the context of factory life in Glasgow or Southall. Stevie Wonder says, "Music is a world within itself, with a language we all understand", and we may add that the musical content of the festival, the fact of the event itself, reflects a world outside itself, a social reality that Britain will have to begin to understand.

Farrukh Dhondy.





Kingston Is A Long Way From New Orleans —
A Review of 'Ice On Fire',
The Mighty Diamonds' new album.
Virgin Records. V2078.

Out of the ghettoes of West Kingston, where men live by the gun, came a vocal trio, who through their music, the rockers music of now, sought a brighter sun. They called themselves the Mighty Diamonds. Their music was soon the talk of the island. Their rhythms, provided by the Revolutionaries, were the distinctive 'strickly Rockers' rhythm of the Channel One Studio in Jamaica. The rhythm of Heavy Manners, characterised by its military style drum, hard stomping beat and pounding bass.

Their popularity lay in their revival of the rock-steady harmonies, popularised by the Heptones in the sixties, which blended well with the strickly rockers rhythms; the immediacy of their social themes; their use of popular language and their balanced tone of cool dread, righteous rebellion and prophetic stance.

By the spring of 1976, the popularity of the Mighty Diamonds had spread from West Kingston and the rest of Jamaica to the Caribbean communities of Britain and the USA. Virgin Records, a rock company who had begun to invest in reggae music, signed the group

to their label. The first album, 'Right Time', was on the market by the summer of seventy-six.

The Mighty Diamonds had found their brighter sun. They were working for a company who produced music for an international market and would invest money in the promotion and exposure of their product. So it was, then, that the Mighty Diamonds, from the relative obscurity of West Kingston, were doing stage shows in the Madison Square Garden in the USA, the Lyceum in London and the Reading Festival. They received a fairly mild response from whites in the States and their Lyceum concert was marred by violence. They were booed at Reading by some whites as a direct emotional response to the physical attacks that whites had experienced at the hands of blacks at the Lyceum.

The album sold about ten thousand copies in Britain which was pretty good by the standards of the reggae market. But it was not good enough for Virgin Records. They had given this reggae group the rock treatment, the international works as far as promotions were concerned, and had not gotten enough in return. From their point of view they did not have money to burn, so the Mighty Diamonds would have to be made to earn. If the rock market would not accept the product in its indigenous form — the Mighty Diamonds' art — then the product would have to be made acceptable to the taste of that market.

So woe and behold, the Mighty Diamonds new album, *'Ice On Fire'*, is yet another example of how capital takes an indigenous art form and transforms it into something else to suit capital's need.

Ice On Fire is a complete departure from *Right Time,* the Mighty Diamonds' first album. The group has been completely recast from the rootsy rockers trio from West Kingston who gave us rockers classics like 'I Need A Roof', 'Have Mercy', 'Right Time', 'Shame And Pride', 'Why Me Black Brother Why' and many others. They have been made into a New Orleans pop/soul group giving us Stylistics and Smokey Robinson renditions of Stylistics and Smokey Robinson songs; Eurovision song contest type songs like 'You Are Just A Song'; an unconvincing rendition of 'Sneakin Sally Through The Alley', New York accents and all; New Orleans rendition of New Orleans sounds like Lee Dorsey's 'Get Out Of My Life Woman'; and a New Orleans rendition of some of the Mighty Diamonds' own songs like 'Cat-o-Nine' and 'Mafia'.Oom-pah, oom-pah up tempo rhythms, New Orleans brass, strings and percussion.

According to a spokesman at Virgin Records, *Ice On Fire* was an experiment in which the Mighty Diamonds, together with a New Orleans backing band, would create a new sound which would represent a sort of fusion of Jamaican and New Orleans sounds. But when we hear the results, it is quite clear that the balance is on the side of New Orleans: New Orleans songs, New Orleans music and musicians; Alain Toussaint, famed producer of the New Orleans sound, a few Mighty Diamonds songs for the sake of credibility and the Mighty Diamonds themselves.

There have been many attempts to create new cross over sounds out of Jamaican music by people like the blues singer Taj Mahal ('Mo Roots'); the white American soul flutist, Herbie Mann ('Herbie Mann In Reggae'); Toots and the Maytals ('Reggae Got Soul' and 'Funky Kingston'); Peter Tosh ('Legalise It' and 'Equal Rights'); Bob Marley; Third World; the Inner Circle and others. To date, it is Bob Marley and the Wailers who have had the most successful results.

'Ice On Fire' is one attempt which has produced poor results. The album could not have been more appropriately titled since what Virgin Records and Alan Toussaint have done is to put ice on the Mighty Diamonds' fire. The fire is not yet out, but what we are getting now is just water. Kingston, it would seem, is a long way from New Orleans.

Linton Kwesi Johnson.



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PUBLIC MEETING
END COLLABORATION WITH AMIN!

To expose the present situation in Uganda, and Britain's role in supporting the present tyrannical regime, and to coordinate plans for the forthcoming Commonwelath Conference.
Speakers:- Joan Lestor, M.P., a representative of Uganda Human Rights Group, representative of the Tanzanian High Commission (to be confirmed), and Peter Hain.

Thursday, May 26, at 7.30 pm in the Small Hall, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London, WC1.

Further details from: The Uganda Freedom Committee, 61 Ronald's Road, London, N5 1XF.
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Race Today

VOICE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY IN BRITAIN JULY/AUGUST 1977 25p

A VIEW OF AFRICA
BY C.L.R. JAMES

THE MAKING OF CARNIVAL '77



LETTERS

Dear Race Today,

The Union des Travailleurs immigrants du Quebec (Union of Immigrant Workers of Quebec) has been recently made aware of the physical assaults and the general condition of the Asian section of the working class in Britain.

Your editoral (April/May) described the need for the Asian workers to organise in order to defend themselves against racist attacks. We certainly support this.

As an organisation of immigrants in Quebec we know well the effects of discrimination based on race and nationality, and how this weakens the worker's movement. UTIQ is committed to promote the rights of immigrants everywhere against this situation.

We wish to extend a fraternal hand of support to our Asian brothers and sisters, and hope that you will keep us fully informed in the future of any development and ways we might further support your struggle.

Yours in struggle,
UTIQ,
Diego Bronzati, president
Andre Jacob, secretary
Montreal Quebec,
Canada.

Dear Race Today,

After acquittance of 21 Iranian students (which was a great victory for all those who were against conspiracy laws) in February 1976, Authorities have been trying to put pressure on us.

In May 1976, one of our members was imprisoned for six months for demonstrating in solidarity with Spanish *anti-fascists.* In September 1976, three of our members were imprisoned for one month having being arrested at the demonstrations against Farah (Fascist Shah's wife). One of the above mentioned three was not allowed into the country later, although when he left to visit his ill mother in Germany he was told that he could come back. In October 1976, one of our members (a Kurdish Iranian) was summoned to the Home Office and was told to leave "within 24 hours" which he did for the fear of being deported into the hands of the fascist tyranny of the Shah and his instrument of repression and torture the SAVAK.

Now it is the latest case that one of our members (who was both among the 21 and the 3) has been held at Canterbury prison by Immigration authorities since June 3 (when he was coming back from France) *without being charged at all.* Even when he asked for his charge he was told; "You make too much trouble (!!), you have been among the 21, you have demonstrated against Farah . . .".

We ask:

1. If it is wrong to be anti-fascist, what have British authorities got against the Nazis?
2. If Mr Shabahang has been tried for his "offences" (which he has), why have the authorities held him again for what he has been sentenced (and has ended his term of sentence) before?

Fraternally,
Iranian Student Society
In Great Britian,
101-103 Gower Street, WC1.

Dear Race Today,

We are writing to you about a most urgent matter that affects our common struggle against racism.

On Saturday, June 18, the Committee Against Racism held a march through the downtown area of Los Angeles to demand a halt to the ever escalating government attacks against immigrant workers and the implementation of resident rights for all undocumented workers.

What was planned as a peaceful march turned into the opposite when the Los Angeles police carried out an unprovoked attack on our demonstration and arrested 29 people, many of whom are immigrant workers. The police also injured many people as they indiscriminately clubbed the marchers.

Nine of those arrested are being charged with "assault on a police officer" and are still in jail as I write these lines. Excessive bail ranging from $15,000 to $20,000 each are being demanded for their release pending trial. All others arrested are being charged with "rioting" or "incitement to riot", merely for being present at the demonstration or being in the area. The judge who set this outrageous bail remarked that since many of those being held were Spanish-speaking then they must be "illegal aliens" and "enemies of the state".

It is apparent to us that the reason for this police attack is that CAR has been organising effectively among the hundreds of thousands of immigrant garment workers, many of whom witnessed the attack on our demonstration. Given the recent rebellion of Latin workers in Chicago, and the increasing militancy of oppressed people throughout the US in the face of high unemployment, racism and deteriorating living conditions, it is not surprising that the authorities would resort to such fascistic measures in an attempt to stop anti-racist organisations.

We ask your help in two respects. Firstly, in light of the hypocritical campaign by the US administration about human rights, we feel the violation ofthe rights of immigrant workers in the US should be an international issue. Specifically, if you are participating in any manner in the review of the Helsinki Accord currently underway in Belgrade, it would be most urgent to raise the issue there, with the June 18 attack as an example. Alerting the anti-racist movement in Britain generally would also be very useful. Secondly, while we realise that *Race Today* is by no means a well financed publication any financial aid you might be able to provide your impoverished counterparts here would be most helpful in securing the release of our friends.

We thank you now for any assistance you can provide.

Yours in struggle,
For the Los Angeles Committee Against Racism,
Kathy Dahlgren, 3084 Maning Ave., Los Angeles 90066, CAL. USA.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS WORKSHOP

The alternative children's book award for non-biased books of literary merit

THE OTHER AWARD

1977 Winners

EAST END AT YOUR FEET
by Farrukh Dhondy Topliners/Macmillan, 55p

Farrukh Dhondy, an Asian teacher and a member of the *Race Today* Collective, has been awarded 'The Other Award' for his first book,East End at Your Feet. It is a collection of short stories, written primarily for secondary school students about the lives of a generation of Asian teenagers who were born and/or schooled in Britain.

The Other Award is an alternative children's book award for non-biased books of literary merit. It was inaugurated by the Children's Rights Workshop in opposition to the conventional awards and, in an attempt to draw attention to important new writing and illustrations for children, and to give due recognition to those writers and illustrators who are taking positive steps to widen the literary experience of young people today.

The commendation states". . . The preoccupations and values of young people today are perceptively and sensitively observed. This is a splendidly written first book presenting a unique and authentic view of multi-racial Britain today".

East End At Your Feed is published by Topliners/Macmillan. Price 35p.

EDITORIAL

PERSPECTIVES FOR 78

In this issue of *Race Today* we have, in our article **The Making of Carnival '77**, drawn attention to three major points:

1. That a Carnival movement exists;
2. That the movement has carried out a political struggle to secure for itself what it needs against the forces of the state and their allies in the black community.
3. The movement has managed to win a victory over those forces as evidenced by the fact that Carnival '77 will be held on the streets of Notting Hill on August 28 and 29.

The movement announced itself in August 1965, on the streets of Notting Hill. It was our first festival: one steelband and 500 revellers with the odd costume here and there.

Emerging from the traditions set by the Trinidad Carnival, we have developed a festival which parades more than 20 steelbands and costumed bands and several sound systems.

These will remain in the realm of pure statistics unless understood as an explosion of the creative forces which have been developing within the womb of the West Indian community in Britain.

The artistic movement has been driven to even greater heights by the mass of spectators and participants who have responded to it. We have drawn heavily on the progress made in the land of Carnival, Trinidad. We have also been able to make our contributions there. The coveted 'Band of the Year' prize for Carnival 1975 in Trinidad, won by Peter Minshall, first appeared on the streets of Notting Hill and threatens to revolutionise mas design on its home ground.

The movement has been enriched by the conventional West Indian artist trained in art colleges in Britain, who have found in Carnival a medium of expression through which the West Indian spirit is released. That it will draw English artists into its ranks, transforming them and being transformed by them is inevitable.

Only a movement with tremendous power and force could boast such achievements and potential after so short a period.

We have had to fight every inch of the way for our successes. In the process, we have, by trial and error, attempted to build the organisational vehicle which would take the movement along the road it has been travelling. With the intensification of the battle against us the consequences of our errors threatened to destroy the entire movement.

Now the '77 Carnival is upon us, we take stock. What have we achieved to date? What is left to be done and how is the question we in *Race Today* pose.

The crisis of 1976 made it necessary to resolve the organisational question. On this very issue the debate still rages. Some have advanced the decimation of the movement as it stands and its replacement by several mini-festivals. Others hold that artists are never political and therefore the leadership ought to be taken by political people — Marxist Leninists, we presume.

We in *Race Today* opposed both and stood for a mass membership organisation based in the heart of the artistic movement itself, democratic in structure with clear principles of organisation.

As a consequence we participated in the reorganisation of the Carnival Development Committee (CDC) along the lines of our perspective.

Come 1977, the movement has managed to lay the foundation for sound organisational leadership. Secondly, we have managed to retain our festival on the streets of Notting Hill.

Now, for that which we have failed to achieve. Here in Britain the tradition exists that the Arts are heavily subsidised by the state. We have failed to win for Carnival the funds it needs and deserves.

Secondly, the mass of people who attend as spectators are inadequately catered for in about every respect.

Thirdly, we have been unable to win a clear statement from the Home Secretary that police officers will stay away from our festival.

Understandably, this year 1977, we were forced to lower our sights and aim for a limited victory, crippled as we were organisationally. Not so for 1978. The CDC is now faced with the task of mobilising its membership immediately after the festival. A programme for winning what we need for 1978 must be put before the entire movement not later than November 1977.

We make two suggestions on organisational preparations for 1978. We need a full time director who operates all year round and with secretarial help. We need, too, to make provisions for the regular publication of the CDC's bulletin *MAS*, as a major weapon in our fight.

Once that basis is laid we offer, the message of the world's greatest calypsonian, the Mighty Sparrow, to our enemies,

"If yuh smart clear de way
If yuh think yuh bad make yuh play."

Race Today Collective August 1977

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THE MAKING OF CARNIVAL 77

BY DARCUS HOWE

The Carnival movement would not survive the crisis of 1976. That was the view of many after the events of last year; a view which penetrated deep into the heart of the movement itself.

It was felt that the Home Secretary would use the fact that young blacks had fought and defeated the police for control of the streets of Notting Hill as a justification for banning the event.

Local councillors were determined that Carnival would have to alter its shape and form in a fundamental way if it were to remain on the streets of the borough.

And then, the Carnival Development Committee, the organisation in the leadership of the movement, exploded in internal strife as a result of growing dissatisfaction within the ranks against sections of the organisation. This appeared to be the final convulsion of a dying movement. "At least," some said, "we went out with a bang!"

Sensing the mood of dejection, the police moved in for the kill. A Carnival squad was set up and photographs of young blacks were circulated throughout the Metropolitan area. For weeks after, young blacks complained that they were questioned about events at the Carnival and threatened with violence when arrested for matters not related to the event. The message was clear to young blacks – keep away from Carnival '77.

It is a victory for the West Indian community and particularly so for the Carnival movement that thousands will celebrate Carnival 1977 on the streets of Notting Hill on August 28 and 29.

We won that victory against official society, sections of which sought to provoke, harass and undermine the Carnival movement either out of existence altogether or into a shape and form acceptable to themselves.

They have achieved neither but they have managed to ferment a feeling of apprehension and uncertainty in the minds of many who have contributed to the development of the movement over the past 12 years.

The sections of official society we refer to are the following:

a The local council who traditionally provide the Carnival with funds, amenities and licences for food-stalls.
b The Community Relations Commission, now the Commission For Racial Equality (CRE) a grant-aid body and therefore a source of funds .
c The Home Office whose minister in government is responsible to the public for the police and is also a donor of funds under the Urban Aid Programme.





THE LOCAL COUNCIL

The local council, responsible for governing the borough in which Carnival takes place, is the Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council. Politically, the councillors are made up largely of right wing Conservative councillors under the leadership of Sir Malby Crofton.

As early as November 1976 opposition to Carnival 1977 began taking shape. The Town Clerk, a paid official of the council, summarised the view of councillors as expressed in debate:

1 That the event might be held on one day only and that more events might be arranged in a suitable enclosure such as White City.

2 That processions and other activities should be restricted to the main roads in the area to enable better control to be maintained in their flow.

3 That consideration might be given to approaching other London Boroughs with a view to them acting as hosts to the event, on a rota basis, thus reducing the continuing pressure on one limited area by what is now becoming established as a national event.

4 Alternatively, that neighbouring boroughs, particularly those with large West Indian communities, should be encouraged to promote similar events over the August Bank Holiday period, which would reduce the number of people being attracted to the narrow streets of North Kensington.

In short, their strategy aimed at either moving Carnival from its traditional home altogether or having a vastly reduced event.

How would they implement this strategy?

Firstly, there was no way in which the council's Voluntary Liaison Committee, the body charged with the responsibility of implementation, could convince the Carnival movement to accept the policies outlined above.

Secondly, the statutory powers given to local government preclude officials from banning the event or having it removed to an area of their choosing.

What were they left with once they were unable to persuade or coerce? They had to find allies within the movement to do their bidding. At one point, Councillor Cocks hinted, even advertised for those allies. He called for a Carnival Committee that would provide "strong black leadership".

Cocks was certainly not referring to Selwyn Baptiste, the Chairman of the 1976 CDC who, in that very month, had a request to meet council officials to discuss Carnival '77 turned down by Cocks. Cocks intimated that he was taking soundings within the black community.

Allies were eventually found among those who were expelled from the 1976 CDC.

General dissatisfaction among mas men and women, steelbands men and women, stall holders and spectators gave Baptiste the moral authority and power to mobilise a badly shaken Carnival Development Committee into expelling certain elements from the organisation.

There were complaints about competitions held and no prizes paid; funds from the Carnival raffle developed wings and flew; stall holders were forced into charging excessively high prices because of exhorbitant rates wrung from traders by individuals within the CDC.

These were merely consequences of a cause much more fundamental. The CDC comprised a loose group of middle class West Indians among whom were to be found a clique of impressarios, social workers and other professionals. They were responsible to no one, they had no idea of the direction in which the organisation would develop. They lived aimlessly, collected thousands of pounds and spent it at each individual's whim and fancy. Characters drifted in and out of the organisation free from the discipline of both principles and rules. Confidence in the mass movement, which built the Carnival to the point at which it has become the largest cultural festival in Europe, they had none. Consequently, they perceived the development of Carnival largely as a project eventually to be taken over by the state and administered by themselves.

The practice of the CDC resulted in chaos within the movement itself. It was and remains largely a working class cultural movement. An overwhelming majority of steelbands men and women are workers who practice their art on weekends. They are not professional musicians. So too are the costumed revellers, spectators and stall holders. The latter trade only on Carnival days, the two days in the year on which they could pull in some extra cash to supplement their wages. It is in response to the demands of this broad movement that the reorganisation of the CDC was set in motion.

The local council would find willing hands among those expelled, a group which in turn could and did recruit others from the vast army of social workers who live parasitically off the problems of the area.

Their first public statement revealed unmistakably their connection with the local council. They issued a call for "strong and capable black leadership". Councillor Cocks had used the exact words only a few months before. They further emphasised that central to their policy was the fact that Carnival would be a local affair, primarily run by local people. No longer the national event it had developed into but an exclusively local affair. It differed little from the strategy of the local council, if it differed at all.

Not only did the council dictate the policy of the group but also how it was brought into being. Days before the publication of their statement, the leader of the council, Sir Malby Crofton, publicly advised that an election ought to take place among residents of Notting Hill to elect a committee. The breakaway group promptly obliged. "Elections", they offered, "would be held at a public meeting arranged for January 25 and all bonified (sic) residents of the Notting Hill area, in the Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, are eligible to vote and stand for office – and them only!"

The committee to emerge from the elections styled themselves the Notting Hill Carnival and Arts Committee, shaped and formed by the fair hands of right wing Conservative Councillors.

It is all well and good to hold a populist election and to elect a few opportunists manipulated by a

small clique. It is quite another task to decimate a Carnival movement which had developed a powerful national and international base. A precondition for delivering to local councillors a wimpering and lame local festival had to be the destruction of the movement as it stood.

The very existence of the breakaway group galvanised the movement into action. The nucleus of the CDC, led by the 1976 Chairman, Selwyn Baptiste, mobilised the steelbands men, the mas men and sound systems crews into a revitalised CDC. They declared, in a published statement that, "we the steelbands men, mas men and sounds men of the CDC wish to inform all that we are responsible for Carnival 1977, for without us there can't be a West Indian Carnival". A list of signatories accompanied the document.

Elections were held, principles of organisation and rules of membership were published in a programme and policy outlined under the following headings – WHO WE ARE: WHAT WE DO; WHERE WE STAND.

About the local council, this is what they had to say: "The CDC holds the view that both the local council and the GLC are responsible for providing amenities from the rates we pay to these bodies. We aim to win from the authorities facilities for stalls, toilet facilities and the construction of viewing bleachers."

The programme and policy was able to restore confidence within the movement and mobilise opinion to its side.

There was no question then that the council could ignore its existence. However, they employed other tactics. Deals were being offered left, right and centre. Get rid of X from this committee and Y from the other. Visits in the dead of night to private homes, sometimes out and out threats and blackmail characterised this period. The threat was always there – if you don't do as you are told then no funds would be forthcoming.

The council aimed, all the while, to support their own group, but dared not because of the growing support for the CDC. Even so, they turned down an application from the CDC for a grant under the urban aid scheme.

The battle soon shifted from the sphere of public propaganda to meetings behind closed doors. Wading through lengthy agendas, debating the finer points were tactics meant to sap the energy of the movement.

At the first meeting Councillor Cocks openly touted the Notting Hill Carnival and Arts Committee. In negotiations they refused to provide for viewing bleachers, refused licences for stalls. They turned down flatly applications for access to certain routes and spaces owned by the council and the use of local halls. In short, once it was clear that their group had failed in accomplishing the task of decimating the movement, they denied the Carnival every single facility applied for.

By the final meeting, Tuesday, July 19, the council had abandoned what was left of the Notting Hill Carnival and Arts Committee. Sir Malby Crofton had invited both groups to finalise plans for the Carnival. This is what his invitation stated. However, matters turned out differently.

After a brief chit chat, Sir Malby produced a statement which he wanted all parties to sign. The statement said that both groups and the council are at one in their support of the Carnival and wish all a happy joyous event. The CDC called for an amendment which would include the fact that we were worried about the success of the event because of the failure of the council to provide adequate facilities.

"How dare you come here and ask me to sign a statement criticising my council", spluttered Sir Malby. He could hardly contain himself.

Councillor Cocks warned that white opposition to Carnival existed and blacks were only 10% of the borough's population.

"Maybe", said Cocks, "if you sign we might be able to get you some money."

"In this post Kunta Kinte period, we are not for sale", came the reply.

Finally, Sir Malby, bereft of all dignity, issued the final threat. "Sign", he threatened, "or else I would issue a statement warning people away from the Carnival because of the chaotic state of affairs."

No one signed and Malby was told he could issue whatever he liked.

It was the final episode in their systematic attempts to destroy our festival.

THE C.R.C.

And now to the Community Relations Commission. The only relationship the CRC had to the whole Carnival struggle was the fact that the Chairman happened to have on his desk applications for funds from both committees.

Normally, such applications are dealt with on merit. A judgement is made based upon the programme and policy of the particular organisation. Oh no! Not in this case. The Chairman, with the authority and power of the Home Office at hand, mobilised all organisations likely to grant funds to the Carnival and told them not to do so. Meanwhile, he summonsed both committees and sought to impose a CRC style unity. All this despite the fact that CRC officers on the ground had investigated the organisational strength of both committees and recommended support for the CDC.

A weaker movement would have been destroyed. The CDC replied by organising its own fund raising activities. Even though the returns were meagre in relation to what was needed, these activities generated an enormous energy and will to survive among Carnival enthusiasts. Once it was realised that the CDC was here to stay, funds were grudginly released in July; funds amounting to one tenth of the budget. With a budget of £100,000 before the CRC, now the CRE, they offered a grant of £500 accompanied by hyprocritical noises wishing all a happy Carnival.

THE HOME OFFICE & THE POLICE

But the Notting Hill Carnival, although a unique multi-racial affair, is a predominantly black festival, and, if Sir Robert Mark is honest he will say that this distinction alone is why he sent an army there, led by a superintendent with delusions of General Patton.

Sir Robert who must take responsibility for what I witnessed as a calculated act of police overkill, has already skillfully used the media to rationalise his actions. . . instead of explaining why he ignored the elementary lesson given to him a week ago by community leaders that a massive police force would provoke violence.

John Pilger *Daily Mirror 1.9.76.*

"It would be less than fair to aver that the police were in the right. All the reports suggest that Scotland Yard was too heavy handed on Monday. It should not have sent 1,500 uniformed men to police the Carnival in the Notting Hill area. . .
The whole exercise was an error of judgement.

Joe Rogaly *Financial Times 1.9.76.*

No reasonable person could doubt that pockets were again being picked in Notting Hill at the weekend-nor that black youths were doing it; nor that a certain amount of threatening was being done to assist it. But what earthly chance was there, at the height of an always emotional Carnival, that a full blooded police charge into the tightly-packed streets of Notting Hill was going to stop it?"

Simon Jenkins *Evening Standard 31.8.76.*

Not one of these three distinguished journalists could be described as men who harbour anti-police sentiments. Yet, they were at one in their responses to the battles between young blacks and the police at last year's Carnival.

Their lengthy articles on the issue will have influenced many while others have been convinced by their own experiences that large numbers of the police officers at the Carnival would inevitably lead to violence.

Both Carnival committees, in recognition of this fact, issued demands for a low police profile. The Carnival Development Committee stated their position as follows: "The Carnival Development Committee believes that the question of policing is now the single, most important issue arising out of Carnival, and cannot be left to negotiations between us and police officers.

The Carnival Development Committee demands a meeting with the Home Secretary, at which the issue of policing will be decided. We aim, at such a meeting, to win a low profile policing agreement from the Home Office."

To this end the committee wrote to the Home Secretary requesting an early meeting with him. Back came the reply that policing is a matter for Operations at Scotland Yard and that the committee ought to be in touch with the Commissioner. A letter was sent off to David McNee who in turn fobbed off the Committee with the officer he claimed to be representing him in the matter, Assistant Commissioner Gibson.

Finally, a week before Carnival, an invitation by telephone was issued to the CDC to meet with Commander Helm, Gibson would turn up only if requested.

At no time in the months leading up to the event have Home Office politicians or bureaucrats met organisers to disscuss the policing of the festival. At no time in the same period did the commissioner of police think the issue important enough to warrant his presence in meetings with either committee. Preliminary meetings with local police officers produced little but requests for maps of the route. At these meetings the local commander flatly refused to discuss policy on policing.

What emerges as police strategy is that Carnival be treated as just another ordinary run-of-the-mill policing activity. In short, no big thing. No one would believe that at last year's event the battle between young blacks and the police was recorded as one of the worse riots in London in 25 years. Equally, that thousands of citizens have expressed concern about the policy police officers are likely to adopt this year.

It is obviously a situation for political intervention by the Home Secretary to give a line to the police force; one which represents the hopes and aspirations of the citizens who have placed ministerial power in his hands.

It would be comic if the consequences were not so dangerous. There is no question now, in the present political climate, what the consequences of a massive police presence will be. The explosion will be heard around the world. If it is the case that the Home Office in its bankruptcy has forced a confrontation on its black citizens and the operational pedants at Scotland Yard are determined for revenge for last year's defeat, then, so let it be.

FORWARD TO CARNIVAL 78

Such are the powers ranged against the Carnival movement in the months leading up to the festival. They will persist during the festival itself.

Profound historical movements with revolutionary aims must necessarily expect severe tests from the forces of the state. In fact, it is in these circumstances that movements discover their strengths and weaknesses; who is for what and who against.

And so it is with the Carnival movement. We have set in motion a cultural movement which is subversive of the all pervading bankruptcy that has paralysed Babylon. Herein lies the revolutionary nature of our movement. The Carnival movement has laid the basis within the CDC, for sound organisational leadership. This year, 1977, we have had to deflect, parry, bob and weave the blows from official society. We have emerged stronger. **Forward to '78, the year of the counter-offensive.**



Julian Stapleton

THE HEADMISTRESS MUST GO

'We have had enough of Miss Curtis'. This was the feeling of more than 30 black parents and students who picketed the Hornsey School for Girls in North London on July 13.

Miss Curtis is the Head Mistress of the school and a large number of her students are Cypriots, West Indians and Asians.

The Black Parents and the Black Students Movements organised both parents and students who are disciplined by the Hornsey School for Girls into a campaign against the practices of Miss Curtis.

In their public statement the BPM and the BSM outlined what they are against. Miss Curtis had stopped girls from taking their exams who were entitled to do so and for trivial reasons students have been made to stand around for long periods in the corridors outside Miss Curtis' office. Others have been suspended and expelled. The list of complaints is long.

The picket, the first show of strength in the campaign was supported by North London students. They took up the chant, "Curtis out, Curtis out" as they flocked from local schools during the lunch break. Support came from white, Asian, Greek and black students.

The BSM, on the basis of a series of statements taken from students and parents in the area, describing their ill-treatment at the hands of Miss Curtis, are demanding the following:
That the Haringey Educational Authority dismiss Miss Curtis; and that an investigation by the Board of Governors of the school into all their complaints be held.

The Board of Governors, appointed by the local Education Authority, are responsible for the administration of the school and for the appointment of teachers. The appointment of the headteacher is the responsibility of the governors with the professional advice of school inspectors. Members of the Educational Authority are elected by the local Council. The councillors are responsible for carrying out the wishes of the electors and the requirements of the Education Acts.

The local press have taken up the issue. The battle lines have been drawn. On the one front, the chairwoman of the Board of Governors, Councillor Sheila Berkery-Smith, stated in the local newspaper: "Nobody could deny that Miss Curtis and her staff are highly qualified, dedicated and extremely hard-working teachers. . . .
. . . .They certainly have my full confidence and support. . . I totally reject any suggestion that girls are treated differently because of their ethnic origins." Berkery-Smith was Labour Mayor of Haringey and former leader of the Council. She has been the chairwoman of the Education and Housing Committee.

On the same front the local Community Relations Council has called for an enquiry into the picketing and has set up a committee for the purpose. Conservative Councillor, Christine Jackson, of the Haringey CRC commented "I stepped in because I didn't want a way-out group to take up the running. We want to avoid confrontation. A demo isn't likely to get a sympathetic hearing".

The BSM and BPM, in reply to the local newspaper, said, "We were totally surprised that any other organisation could think of setting up an enquiry into the complaints that we have made public about Miss Curtis. . . The only reason that the Haringey CRC with its Councillors, police officers, Education officers and various representatives of the local establishment could wish to divert attention



from our complaints must be the desire to bury the demands of students and parents under a heavy cover-up."

The present campaign and mobilisation of blacks in Haringey on the education question is not new. When in March 1969 the Haringey Borough Council implemented a policy of 'banding' as a means of dispersing immigrant school children, the black community fought against it. As a result of mass agitation and mobilisation in 1971, blacks forced the Labour controlled council to drop the scheme.

Further, black parents took up the struggle against the channelling of black children into Educationally Subnormal Schools (ESN). This history forms the basis from which the present educational fight is being waged.

Since the picket, more parents and students have contacted the campaign giving further examples of harassment by Miss Curtis.

Claudius Hilliman
Race Today Collective

THE TRIAL OF THE ISLINGTON 18

Stalemate rules the streets of North London as police and young blacks alike survey the legal wreckage that litters the aftermath of the Islington 18 conspiracy trial. Black youth in Lewisham and Kensal Rise waiting in the wings for their cues to tread the legal stage, puzzle over what the outcome of the Islington 18 trial means for them.

Only eight convictions out of a staggering possible tally of around 90 have come out of this latest mass trial of young blacks. The blue uniforms are looking as stupid and egg-smeared as they did after the police defeats at the Mangrove, Burning Spear, Leeds Bonfire and the Carib trials, but the difference is that this time they tried to pin conspiracy on young blacks instead of the more usual tactic of affray and riot.

Yet, two have been imprisoned and five sent to borstal on the strength of convictions under the Theft Act not even remotely connected with the warfare that Carnival turned into last year in Notting Hill. Not one of the Islington youths was found guilty of conspiracy to rob or steal at the Carnival, by the five black and seven white jurors in a record-breaking talk-in lasting over 170 hours and taking in eight nights locked up at a secret hotel.

This catch-all clause of conspiracy, described by trial judge Bruce Campbell as "global and umbrella-like" then later as "convenient and sensible" failed miserably to get the convictions Scotland Yard wanted to justify ex-Commissioner Sir Robert Mark's disgraceful public proclamation that "gangs of black muggers" caused all the trouble at the Carnival. But it did serve to keep those whom the Islington police wanted off the streets out of circulation for a very long time before the trial started on April 25.

And what is more, the prosecution based its case solely on "confession" statements wrung out of the youths (who were aged between 14 and 19 at the time of their arrest) by means of threats and beatings.

Two young brothers, who did confess earlier in the trial on dubious legal advice, tied up with a plea-bargaining deal to "plotting with each other to steal at the Carnival," provided the only Carnival convictions.

After a 15-week Old Bailey run at a cost of well over £25,000, it is little wonder that Det. Insp. Andrew Gallacher, who stage-managed the raids and round-ups last October, looked sheepish, as some people all round the stunned courtroom stared in frank disbelief that a serious criminal trial could end so farcically.

This cop's face should have been a blazing beetroot when the jury refused to convict on a third of the flimsy charges and acquitted on well over half, but he looked like he was reaping a bit of vengeful consolation from the savage sentences Judge Campbell slapped on where he could.

But the victory that young black Londoners can snatch at, lies as one defence barrister put it, in the sure knowledge that never again will the police risk such a ludicrous "elephant to catch a mouse" conspiracy case to come before a British court.

Diane Easby

A VIEW O

BY C.L.R

Race Today takes as its centrepiece an extract from the introductory essay of C.L.R. James' book Nkrumah and the Ghana Revolution (published in the Motive series by Allison & Busby, 1977). The book is a collection of essays, speeches and letters written during the 50's and the 60's. It ranges over a wide spectrum of topics including an analysis of the Ghana revolution, major events marking the progressive decolonisation of Africa, an exposition of Lenin's writings on the relationships between the party, the masses and the state, and a number of letters addressed to Kwame Nkrumah.

In part, the book adopts an internationalist's view of the recent history of Africa. In part it tells the story of James' involvement, initially as tutor and comrade of Nkrumah whom he introduced to the Pan-Africanist leader George Padmore, and subsequently as a friend and advisor to the people and government of decolonised Ghana led by Nkrumah.

James writes of an Africa which he sees in relation to the rest of the world. This introduction, which sums up the analysis of events and tendencies manifested by independent African republics during their political infancy, directs attention on the peoples who are governed and those who govern them in black Africa. The analysis is guided by two main aspects of James' general understanding. First, the future of Africa must be rooted in the African experience of African life. That means that the history and culture of the African people cannot be ignored by the intellectual classes who at present control power. Secondly, this history cannot be understood, Africa cannot be governed, cannot be a power in the modern world without the application of Marxist science.

James isolates the African intellectual as a Western type. While the intellectual class is in the vanguard of the revolution, it has also betrayed, dissipated and negated the promise of the Ghanaian revolution. The extract which we print moves from an analysis of the African intellectual as a historical type to a class understanding of the African governments.

Even prior to the revolutions in Mozambique and Angola, and before the maturing of the anti-imperialist struggle in Zimbabwe, James emphasised the essential connection between the African revolution and the rest of the world including the Soviet Union and the internationalist capitalist bloc.

James poses independence without isolation. The revolution of Africa, or Asia, or the West Indies needs the example and documented history of the West; it needs "economic, educational, technological" help from the advanced areas of Western civilization. But also, a very important also, the Western world, for its salvation must realise,

> "that on the millions of Africans as much as on any other section of modern society, hangs the real beginning of the history of humanity to which all that has hitherto taken place is only prehistory, more dehumanising and destructive in the twentieth century than ever before".

This realisation can only be based on an understanding of the strengths that Africa, or the black proletariat of the advanced world, can bring through their history and present action to the realisation of such a vision within a worldview which is at once international and revolutionary.

The future of Africa will be rooted in the African experience of African life. Yet nobody, European or African, can make anything clear and consistent of the developing pattern in Africa unless upon the basis of the substantially documented and widely debated historical experiences of Western civilisation. That must first be established so that he who runs or merely looks at television may read. Modern Europe begins in France in 1848, and Karl Marx in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* pointed a fearsome finger at what he then saw as the dominating political reality of the age which was beginning:

"It is immediately obvious that in a country like France, where the executive power commands an army of officials numbering more than half a million indivi-

F AFRICA

JAMES

duals and therefore constantly maintains an immense mass of interests and livelihoods in the most absolute dependence; where the state enmeshes, controls, regulates, superintends and tutors civil society from its most comprehensive manifestations of life down to its most insignificant stirrings, from its most general modes of being to the private existence of individuals; where through the most extraordinary centralisation this parasitic body acquires a ubiquity, an omniscience, a capacity for accelerated mobility and an elasticity which finds a counterpart only in the helpless dependence, in the loose shapelessness of the actual body politic — it is obvious that in such a country the National Assembly forfeits all real influence when it loses command of the ministerial posts, if it does not at the same time simplify the administration of the state, reduce the army of officials as far as possible and, finally, let civil society and public opinion create organs of their own, independent of the government power. But it is precisely with the maintenance of that extensive state machine in its numerous ramifications that the *material interests* of the French bourgeoisie are interwoven in the closest fashion. Here it finds posts for its surplus population and makes up in the form of state salaries for what it cannot pocket in the form of profit, interest, rents and honoraria. On the other hand, its *political interests* compelled it to increase daily the repressive measures and therefore the resources and the personnel of the state power, while at the same time it had to wage an uninterrupted war against public opinion and mistrustfully mutilate, cripple, the independent organs of the social movement, where it did not succeed in amputating them entirely."

That is what I saw in Ghana in 1960 and this is what has been mounting in ever-widening circles as the outstanding social and political development in contemporary Africa. The African state enmeshes, controls, regulates, superintends and tutors civil society from its most comprehensive manifestations of life down to its most insignificant stirrings. At least it attempts to do so, and where it fails will compromise for static acquiescence. That is so and must be so. The contemporary state has not only a finger in every pie, it initiates the gathering of material for all new pies, and finds it necessary to claim at least a token share in all the old pies. This is so more particularly in underdeveloped countries and overwhelmingly so in dynamic underdeveloped countries determined to "catch up with and in time surpass" the advanced countries. Stalin, to whom we owe the phrase, at least caught up with and surpassed many millions of his own subjects.

The concentration on the one-party aspect of the term one-party state is a typical myopia of people who insist on looking for two parties and are horrified to find only one. In actuality they see none. In the African one-party state the term "party" is a euphemism. It is the state, that expanding source of dignities, wealth and power in countries and among people which have very little of these and are accustomed to being excluded from them.

Politically the people of Africa have gone through the initiation from puberty into manhood. Sometimes, though not always, the circumcision was rough: the physician was modern, but often a member of the Royal Family was the only anaesthetic. The great barrier in the way of grasping, of absorbing this simple but shattering new portent in contemporary history has been the defensive reiteration by the leaders of British public thought that the British government "gave", "handed over" independence for which (God save us) it had long been training them.

The truth is that the population was trained by two forces: imperialism, which exploited them with a brutal and horrible cruelty and shamelessness, and the concomitant violence adequate to ridding themselves of this burden grown intolerable. All politics in Africa today begins from there. As in independent India, the violence in face of which the imperialist power retreats can burst out after the imperialist departure.

Economic relations are the basis of any form of state and colonialist states of Africa were from start to finish organisations for economic exploitation. Economic relations in Africa have not collapsed, although they were very near to collapse. Economic relations are relations between poeple. The economic relations in the African states have acquired new functionaries, that is all, but it is now that the total collapse is imminent, because *the people the new functionaries have to manage are not the people over whom the colonial power and its civil servants, its chiefs and its army, kept order.*

The whole of the Western world became poisoned by the fantasy of whether independent Africa could work the two-party system or not. And as the unreality of this has become manifest, there has been a spreading tendency to accept the one-party state as for the time being the next best substitute. The reality is that the new African states for the most part are bastard imitations of the Russian one-party state of Eastern Europe or headed for that haven by way of bastard imitations of the two-party state of Western democracy (with the opposition in jail, in exile or very conscious that that is the fate which awaits it unless by hook or by crook it gets hold of the power). Both cohorts in the manner of African chiefs are ennobled by a large new umbrella

which they quite shamelessly dignify with the title of African socialism. Thereby they seek to do two things: sanctify the concentration of all available funds in the hands of the state, i.e. their own hands, and seek to build a wall of consciousness between themselves and the capitalist imperialism against which they mobilised the African masses in the struggle for independence. One feature is common to all these states. As I found in Ghana in 1960, and have verified on innumerable occasions for practically all of newly independent Africa, the population is convinced of one new inescapable feature of the new governments, the corruption of government and party officials from the highest to the lowest. Where the ordinary citizen does not find it he is uneasily aware that something is wrong. As Lenin said so clearly of the Russia of 1923, corruption is inherent in the system. The brutality which follows this corruption pervading any new sphere of government has been amply demonstrated for all the world to see and even officially acknowledged by the late Nikita Khrushchev at the Twentieth Congress of the Soviet Communist Party.

The man at the helm is the African intellectual. He succeeds - or independent Africa sinks: unlike Britain in the seventeenth and France in the eighteenth centuries, there is no class on which the nation falls back after the intellectuals have led the revolution as far as it can go. In the twentieth century it is quite impossible for Africa to develop the class of large-scale capitalists that followed the victory over the slaveowners in the Civil War: apart from the changed picture of the world view, there is not even the mercantilist base that America had. As in Russia after the 1917 revolution, it is the intellectuals who will lead the continent. Yet Western racial prejudice is so much a part of the Western outlook on life that the African intellectual continues to be looked upon as some kind of primitive barbarian climbing the sharp and slippery slope to civilisation. The Congo rebels against Tshombe, threatening and even shooting white prisoners, evoked a chorus from minds not merely tinged but soaked in the mire of racial superiority. The following from the *Evening Standard* was typical:

"One of the many paradoxes of the violent and unhappy Congo is the part now being played by Mr Thomas Kanza, the Foreign Minister of the Stanleyville rebels who, according to one report, threatened to 'devour' the European hostages.

Mr Kanza, a Harvard man, is well known in London, where he was Congolese Charge d'Affaires from 1962 until last December. He is a sophisticated and amusing bachelor of thirty-one who is remembered as the host of some lively parties while he was posted here.

He played a leading part in lobbying against the Union Miniere interest behind the scenes at Westminster. He resigned when Mr Adoula was succeeded as Prime Minister of the Congo by Mr Tshombe.

His father was Burgomaster of Leopoldville. After graduating from Louvain University in Belgium, he read psychology and education at the College of Europe in Bruges, won a scholarship to Harvard, joined the EEC in Brussels and returned to America as Congolese delegate to the United Nations. He is now negotiating in Nairobi on behalf of the rebels.

Personal political ambition and long-term opposition to Mr Tshombe no doubt explain his present loyalties, but many people who knew him in London find them a little difficult to reconcile with the memory of an urbane diplomat."

One would believe that the regimes of Hitler and Stalin had existed ten thousand years ago in the twilight dawn of history. In fact the African intellectual is a modern type, and will never be understood except as a type of Western intellectual. Luckily the type has been analysed and described with a clarity and force unsurpassed in modern history, literature or psychology. The author is Dostoyevsky, and the occasion is that supreme masterpiece of European criticism, his address on Pushkin, delivered in Moscow in 1880, a year before his death. The only thing to do is to quote various passages, and the reader is asked himself to substitute Africa wherever Dostoyevsky says Russia:

"The character is true and admirably realised; it is an eternal character, long since native to Russia. These wanderers are wandering still, and it will be long before they disappear. In our day they no longer visit gypsy camps, seeking to discover their universal ideals and their consolation in that wild life, far from the confused and pointless activity of Russian intellectuals; now, with a new faith, they adopt socialism which did not exist in Aleko's day, and labour eagerly, thinking like Aleko that they may reach so their final goal, not for themselves alone, but for all men."

Dostoyevsky knew the origin of these socialists:

"The greatest number of intellectual Russians in the time of Pushkin served then, even as now, as civil servants in government positions, in railways, banks, or other ways, or even engaged in science or lecturing — earning money in a regular peaceful, leisured fashion, even playing cards, without desire for escape, whether to the gypsies or other refuge of more modern days. They only played at liberalism, 'with a tinge of European socialism' which in Russia assumes a certain benignity — but that is after all only a matter of time. One man is not even yet annoyed while another, encountering a bolted door, furiously beats his head against it. All men meet destiny in their turn, unless they choose the saving road of humble identification with the people. Even though some escape, this must remain truth for the majority."

Like the African, the Russian of Dostoyevsky's day yearns for truth.

". . . yearns for the truth, somehow and somewhere lost, which he can nowhere find. He cannot tell wherein this truth resides, when this truth was lost, nor where it can be found, suffering nonetheless. Meanwhile a restless and fantastic creature searches for salvation in external things, as needs he must. Truth continues external to him, perhaps in some European country, with its more stable organisation and settled mode of life. Nor can he understand that truth is after all within him. How could he understand this? For a century he has not been himself in his own country. He has no culture of his own. He has forgotten how to work. He has gorwn up within closed walls, as in a convent."

Despite the consistently reactionary character of his politics, Dostoyevsky knew where only salvation could be found. He knew that

"Truth is within them, not without. Find thyself in thyself. Humble thyself to thyself. Be master of thine own soul, and see the truth. Not without, nor abroad is this truth; not in things, but in thee and in thine own labour upon thyself. If thou conquerest thyself, then wilt thou be free beyond dreams, and make others free; thou wilt labour upon a great task, and will find in it happiness and fulfilment, and, at long last, understanding of thine own poeple and their holy truth. If thou art thyself unworthy, proud, and given to malice, if thou demandest life as a gift, without payment, neither with the gypsies nor in any other place, whatsoever shalt thou discover the 'harmony of the spheres'."

And the great master of fiction returns once more to the reality of the Russian intellectual:

"In the remote heart of his fatherland, he is yet in exile. Conscious of his aim, he yet knows not where to turn. Later, he still feels himself in the midst of strangers, even more a stranger to himself, despite his brains and his sincerity, wherever he may roam. At home or abroad. He loves his country, but cannot trust it. He knows its ideals, but has no faith in them. He cannot see the possibility of any work in his own country, and he can feel only sorrow and derision for those few who can believe in it."

That is why African intellectuals kill. Perhaps we are watching in Dostoyevsky's


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pages the crisis of the intellectuals of all the underdeveloped countries and African peoples.* What Dostoyevsky feared more than anything else was their coming to power. He had died before the Russian proletariat appeared on the scene. Lenin unreservedly placed his faith in a new Russia upon the proletariat, small and inexperienced as it was. But as we shall see, before he died he was very much aware of what Dostoyevsky had divined, in fact seen. The African intellectual may even in times of stress revisit and consult the Juju of his parents. That does not in the least alter the fact that if he is an educated person, he is a man of Western civilisation. The only advantage he has is that Africa is so backward that he will be guilty of violences far closer to Mussolini's cruelties than to the unbridled savagery of hitlerism or stalinism seeking "to catch up with and surpass".

The road out of this fearful morass which daily multiplies must of necessity be a simple one. A government must arise which will state publicly and officially what all the population knows. In Ghana in 1960 I found the educated section of the population seething with anger against this cancer. Ghanaians in 1960 were very proud of themselves. They felt that they had made history — which they undoubtedly had. And now corruption was eating away at the foundations of the new state they so proudly cherished. Under strong public pressure Nkrumah had appointed a government commission of investigation, but the opinions that I pertinaciously sought and found were that such a commission was bound to be powerless before so pervasive an evil. There was a sense that not a commission seeking wrongdoers but the whole function of government was involved. I did my best to let them see that I understood their problem. As best I could I indicated the way out. The problem is first and foremost an internal problem of the African state. That no outside body can fix for them. But the problem also lies at the nub of Africa's international relations. Without economic, technological and educational help and encouragement from the advanced areas of Western civilisation, Africa will go up and go down in flames, and heaven only knows when that conflagration will be halted. But the advanced world will hear and understand the need for aid on the scale and in the manner required only from a continent which has righted itself and registers across the skies that something and something new has again come out of Africa.

One definitive stage has been reached and passed. All, including the sycophantic rulers themselves, recognise the utter futility of constant begging for aid. They will never get it, and even if they get it they are in no position to make adequate use of it. At present they are allowed to create glittering units of foreign-owned exploitation, a token industrialisation which only places them more tightly and firmly in the shackles of the economic domination which they denounce and woo almost in the same breath.

The future of this vast continent and its millions lies in their making the advanced peoples realise that on the millions of Africans, as much as on any other section of modern society, hangs the real beginning of the history of humanity to which all that has hitherto taken place is only prehistory, more dehumanising and self-destructive in the twentieth century than ever before. But this embracing of the millions of Africa by the West can take place only on a clear recognition that they are an African people, with a way of life and a view of life and society thousands of years old. Tribalism is this way of life. Everything that does not begin there is for the Africans vanity and vexation of spirit. Tribalism in contemporary Africa has a fantastic and curiously modern history. I take leave to give some indications of it.

It is the practice of the contemporary African politician in power to denounce tribalism as the chief enemy of progress in Africa. By that he is usually defending the centralised power he wields (this he identifies with the nation) against the trivial and unscrupulous politicians who, defeated at the elections, i.e. the struggle for the centralised power, find in their own tribe a basis for immediate partial and possible complete power. These quite unprincipled tribalists are not helped to see the error of their ways by a similar unscrupulous use of tribal connections, associations and rivalries by the very government which is denouncing tribalism. These unsavoury practices are a commonplace of African politics, and their superficies are quite often repeated by the liberal and socialist supporters and apologists of African self-government. Yet certain observers of African tribalism have claimed for it an integral place in any universal reconstruction of the modern world. It is a West Indian, i.e. a Western poet, direct heir of Rimbaud and Baudelaire, who is the creator of the concept of Negritude. In *The Black Jacobins* I have translated and published a review of sections of the now world-famous poem, Aime Cesaire's *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal. . . .*

". . . my Negritude is not a stone, its
deafness a sounding board for
the noises of the day
My Negritude is not a mere spot of
dead water on the dead eye of
the earth
My Negritude is no tower, no cathedral
it cleaves into the red flesh of the
teeming earth
it cleaves into the glowing flesh of
the heavens
it penetrates the seamless bondage of
my unbending patience
Hoorah for those who never invented
anything
for those who never explored anything
for those who never mastered anything
but who, possessed, give themselves up
to the essence of each thing
ignorant of the coverings but possessed
by the pulse of things
indifferent to mastering but taking the
chances of the world. . .

In contrast to this vision of the African unseparated from the world, from nature, a living part of all that lives, Cesaire immediately places the civilisation that has scorned and persecuted Africa and Africans:

Listen to the white world
its horrible exhaustion from its
immense labours
its rebellious joints cracking under
the pitiless stars
its blue steel rigidities, cutting
through the mysteries of the flesh
listen to their vainglorious conquests
trumpeting their defeats
listen to the grandiose alibis of their
pitiful floundering. . . .

The poet wants to be an architect of this unique civilisation, a commissioner of its blood, a guardian of its refusal to accept:

But in so doing, my heart, preserve
me from all hate
do not turn me into a man of hate of
whom I think only with hate
for in order to project myself into
this unique race
you know the extent of my boundless
love
you know that it is not from hatred
of other races
that I seek to be cultivator of this
unique race. . .

He returns once more to the pitiful spectre of West Indian life, but now with hope:

for it is not true that the work of man
is finished
that man has nothing more to do in the
world but be a parasite in the world
that all we now need is to keep in step
with the world
but the work of man is only just beginning
and it remains to man to conquer all
the violence entrenched in the recesses
of his passion
and no race possesses the monopoly of
beauty,
of intelligence, of force, and there is
a place for all at the rendezvous of
victory. . .

* Certainly the West Indians (British, French and Spanish), the most articulate of the formerly colonial coloured peoples, are an embodiment in the twentieth of what Dostoyevsky saw in the nineteenth century.











Here is the centre of Cesaire's poem. By neglecting it, Africans and the sympathetic of other races utter loud hurrahs that drown out common sense and reason. The work of man is not finished. Therefore the future of the African is not to continue not discovering anything. The monopoly of beauty, of intelligence, of force, is possessed by no race, certainly not by those who possess Negritude. Negritude is what one race brings to the common rendezvous where all will strive for the new world of the poet's vision. The vision of the poet is not economics or politics, it is poetic, *sui generis,* true unto itself and needing no other truth. But it would be the most vulgar racism not to see here a poetic incarnation of Marx's famous sentence, 'The real history of humanity will begin.' "

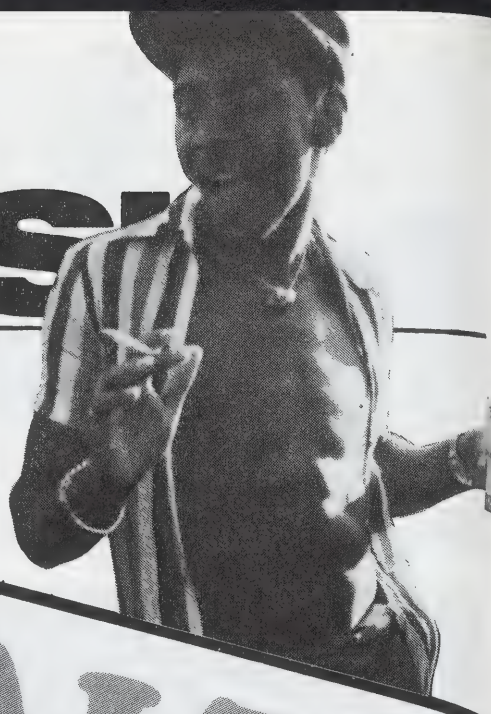
In this poem Cesaire makes a place for the spiritual realities of the African way of life in any review and reconstruction of the life of modern man. Cesaire's whole emphasis is upon the fact that the African way of life is not an anachronism, a primitive survival of history, even of prehistoric ages, which needs to be nursed by unlimited quantities of aid into the means and ways of the supersonic plane, television, the Beatles and accommodation to the nuclear peril. Cesaire means exactly the opposite. It is the way of life which the African has not lost which will restore to a new humanity what has been lost by modern life with

its rebellious joints cracking under
the pitiless stars
its blue steel rigidities, cutting through the
mysteries of the flesh.

These are poetic divinations of worlds to come. They are the waves of reality in which present-day Africa must live if it is to live at all.

BACKLASH

CARNIVAL 77



CAPITAL RADIO INTERVIEWS
RACE TODAY

It's August and Bank Holiday rounds off this month. The Bank Holiday in London means Carnival in Notting Hill Gate as we heard earlier in the news. Over the past 10 years it has grown from being a local affair to being an international event. Last year it ended tragically. Earlier today, Barry Clayton asked Darcus Howe, Chairman of the Carnival Development Committee and the editor of Race Today, what is happening this year?

Well this year the Carnival is on and the Carnival Development Committee have been progressing in organising the different steelbands and the whole cultural organisation of the festival.

What is the position as far as the committee is concerned because I have heard rumours that there are two factions within the committee?

Well there is the Carnival Development Committee of which I am the Chairman and Mr Baptiste is the Director. There is another committee which calls itself the Notting Hill Carnival and Arts Committee of which I know very little.

It is not going to be a case of divide and rule?

No, we are not going to clash in any way because there is nothing to clash about. Carnival is essentially a cultural festival.

Now, organisationally, how are you liaising with the police and residents in the area for this year's carnival?

Well, last year we had some problems with residents who complained, and there is nothing of the kind this year, that is to say there is no body of people who want the Carnival out of the area.

But what about the people who complained about music after midnight?

Well, they are not complaining this year. We haven't heard anything from them. On the question of the police, last year, as you know, after the incident which was recorded as probably one of the worst riots in London in 25 years, there were a large number of post-mortems on it. And in that we had a wide variety of views. The major view which seemed to be in charge over all else was the fact that there were too many policemen there, and that they had policed the Carnival literally out of existence. That was the view of editors of leading newspapers, politicians, other journalists and so on. Now, in our programme and policy this year, we stated that we ought to have a low police profile, that is as few as possible, remembering from 1975 going back to 1965 you would see four or five policemen. So that is what we are saying. The police have not come back on it. We wrote to the Home Secretary. He said that it is a matter for operations at Scotland Yard. We don't know what they are going to do.

Do you envisage any repeats of last year?

Well I do not want to be emotive but I can't see how those large numbers of policemen threatening the Carnival by their very presence could avoid trouble. Because, let us put it this way, when you see numbers of policemen it is because you expect something. If we were to walk out of the studio, and see 50 policemen outside, the first thing we are going to say is that there is some trouble here and, by and large, an element of trouble creeps into everyone's mind because there are a lot of policemen about. We hope that this year they are not going to do that. What have they got? They have a lot of power on their side because if they decide to bring them, nobody can stop them. What have we got? We have got an enormous amount of credibility, that is to say thousands upon thousands of people, quarter of a million people, who are by and large believing that we can run this thing without large numbers of police.

How often do you liaise with the police?

Well I have been away. I understand that there have been some meetings. At the last one I attended we asked the police, "would you let us know now what your policy is going to be?" and Commander Jackaman said "no".

Now, what about the situation as far as pickpocketing is concerned? A lot of people said that there were a lot of pickpockets at last year's Carnival. What can you do about something like that if it crops up again?

In our programme and policy we ask them to take two days holiday. We believe that because of the consciousness of blacks, we believe that we could ask blacks who pick pockets not to do so on such and such a day because of 1,2,3, and 4. And I talked about credibility. Any organisation, any movement that can mobilise quarter of a million people must have a tremendous degree of credibility, and we will have to use that in order to win. You either use credibility or force. The police seem to be saying they ought to use force. We believe we ought to use our credibility to win people's minds to stop doing something. I believe we can do that, I have done it before.

All this serious talk about the Carnival

makes one almost forget that it should be an occasion for a tremendous amount of fun and always has been until last year.

Yes, that is what we have set out to do and we have succeeded to a large degree apart from the fact that the official society, the local council and the Home Office, they are very much unable it seems or do not care to respond. They say that they want a happy Carnival but everything that they do heads in the opposite direction.

You have approached the Home Secretary then?

We wrote to him and he referred us back to the operational pedants at Scotland Yard. That is to say people who can't see beyond operations and bureaucracy. And that is dangerous in modern society especially where people are thirsting for some freedom and space to move and to dance and, as we say on Carnival day, to jam. We need less of that operational bureaucracy and more of creative freedom than we seem to be getting.

I mean that apart from London's community coming down to Notting Hill you have got a lot of people coming in from other parts of the world as well.

Yes in the last few days I got phone calls from Sweden, one from Canada, two from the United States and two from Trinidad. They asked "what days are the Carnival?" "Can you put us up?" and so on. So this tremendous international response to the London Carnival is one of the discoveries in the cultural life of the modern world. I will put it that way. I will go to that extent. It is one of the new discoveries, our Carnival in London. I think it is a tremendous event and we have to try and struggle to win for it what we think it needs.

Lets hope you manage all that because I for one am very much looking forward to being down there and taking in what I think is great spectacle and a great time.

And we hope people aren't put off by scare stories.

GREAT IS THE CARNIVAL AND IT WILL PREVAIL

The Notting Hill Carnival 1977 is on. West Indians from all over Britain will celebrate Carnival on the streets of Notting Hill on Sunday and Monday, August 28 and 29.

No thanks are due to the national press, the police, local white racists or council officials who have tried, persistently throughout the year, to obstruct and sabotage the Carnival. The victory belongs firstly to the Carnival Development Committee (CDC), the main organisers of the event. And especially to the mas people and steelbands and sound systems who reorganised themselves to meet the crisis.





There has been a public police offensive since Carnival 1976. Ex-Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Robert Mark, introduced it on the day following last year's festival. He said that there will be no 'no go' areas in London. This was his own inflammatory response to the merited criticism of the army of police who invaded the Carnival.

Then came the numerous arrests of black youth all over London on 'sus' charges. We know of cases where youths were picked up and asked if they were at the Notting Hill Carnival. They were told that if they were there they would be taken to Notting Hill police station and the officers there would know how to deal with them. We know also of other youths with previous convictions who have been reminded of their prison numbers and told to stay away from the Carnival. A magistrate, in his Camberwell Court, has taken the unusual step of banning Lewisham youths from attending the Carnival this year. So, if you're young and black and have been picked off by the police before, the message is that you participate at your peril in this important annual, cultural event.

The Islington 18 Trial has been re-christened by the press. The press calls it the 'Carnival Trial' or the 'Carnival Riot Trial' when, in fact, only a minority of the charges against the youth related to the Carnival.

All this has been done and timed to create a public mood of fear and opposition to the staging of Carnival and to coincide with the dates of Carnival this year. But this tactic has now failed. Nothing can now stop the Notting Hill Carnival 1977.

Faced with this fact, the police are arming themselves for a war on peaceful Carnival revellers. Rumours of police preparations have been rife in the West Indian community for some time. These preparations have now, however, been publicly confirmed with the news that the police will be issued with riot shields as used in Northern Ireland. But this is just the tip of the iceberg.

The police are not prepared to release details of the numbers of police officers who will be present at Carnival or details of the other equipment which they have ordered from the Ministry of Defence for the Carnival. This information would show, what West Indians already believe, that the police are still thinking of coming for a well-planned revenge.

The arguments used last year for the army of police on that occasion were the thefts and pick pockets at Carnival. Anybody knows that anywhere in the world, where thousands of people gather, one has to secure one's money and valuables; be it at a football match, Piccadilly Circus, Lords Cricket Ground or Carnival.

It was the heavy policing of Carnival which created the disturbance and led to the crisis in the West Indian community over what to do about Carnival this year. The police, the CRC, the local council have tried this year to fish in the troubled waters of this crisis.

The Black Parents Movement and Black Students Movement support the re-organised Carnival Development Committee because its organisational structure, similar to our own, tends to put power in the hands of those who make Carnival possible — the steelbands' people, the mas people and the sound systems.

The police have tried to pretend that they are needed to keep the peace; to keep warring Carnival factions from each others throats. They have now been deprived of this pretext. Both committees have united on a route and have united in their opposition to the heavy policing of Carnival.

Nevertheless, in the opinion of the Black Parents Movement and the Black Students Movement, the danger still remains. And it comes from the police and those in authority who feel that the West Indian community should not command the streets of Notting Hill for the two days of the Carnival festival.

Last year, the opponents of Carnival tried to stop it or to have it removed to the White City Stadium, Battersea Park—anywhere but the streets of Notting Hill. This year, the press and police have succeeded in intimidating some people from coming to see and participate in the artistic and creative activity that West Indians have brought to the shores of this country. But, 'the road make to walk on Carnival day'. And that's how it will be this year and in the years to come.

Great is the Carnival and it will prevail.

Issued by Black Parents Movement and Black Students Movement, 57 Victoria Road, Finsbury Park, London N.4. For further information telephone 01-272 4889 or 272 8529.

I AND I AGAINST THE NOTTING HILL CARNIVAL AND ARTS COMMITTEE

I would like to express I personal meditations on the organisation of this year's Carnival.

Confusion reigns over the organisation of this year's Carnival. There are two different committees in opposition for the right to organise Carnival. I have personal knowledge of both. I am a member of neither. The first is the Carnival Development Committee (CDC) who have always organised Carnival. The second is the Notting Hill Carnival and Arts Committee (NHCAC) who want to organise Carnival this year. But why? What have NHCAC ever done for Carnival and what do they want to do with it. I suggest these three alternatives.

1) They genuinely want to make Carnival better.

2) They want to use Carnival as a political tool.

3) They want to wreck Carnival.

To make Carnival better I think the main requirements are:—

A) To get more people to come and enjoy Carnival. By their actions the NHCAC are threatening Carnival and discouraging I peaceful people from coming.

B) To lessen the police presence. But I can't see the NHCAC doing this when they are warning of a massive police presence. The police came determined to wreck Carnival by force last year. This resulted in the clashes we all know about. Public opinion went against the police. The question is, will they and the government heed to the peoples opinion as expressed last year or will they be heavily armed (like in South Africa) this year?

C) To stop the hustling at Carnival. Knowing the NHCAC, I can't see how they are going to do this. Only the people can do this. The CDC say that the pick pockets must take a holiday at Carnival like everyone else.

D) To provide better amenities for Carnival. I think most of these are best provided by the state. These are mainly more toilets, better public transport, more notices, medical facilities and a larger area similar to those facilities provided at sporting events and other Carnival and festivities.

E) To have more bands and sounds at Carnival. Most of the steelbands are supporting the CDC and the best sounds are always for the people, so how can the NHCAC get more.

The NHCAC are known for their connections with a local black group, a political organistion preaching outdated militant black Nationalist rhetoric. It is true that they are one of the few organisations to have survived from the Black Power era, but I am sure this is not because, as they claim, they are supported by the black community. Most people known to have checked them came away disturbed by their folly tricktion.

They say they want to organise Carnival into a political protest about the conditions of black people in this country (so everyone should come with a placard?) This sounds good but Carnival is a time to try to forget the yolk of oppression. This is also a way to end Carnival because I am sure I am not going to Carnival to demonstrate. I am going to enjoy I self in love and unity with I people. So it looks like the opportunists come again once the people have something good. We don't want no dictator or man controller.

One way to conquer is to divide first. I want to know who tell the NHCAC to divide Carnival. Really and truly I cannot see what their actions have done but to try to cause division. After last year's clashes, the most important thing for this year's Carnival is unity and a large turnout, NHCAC have organised for the opposite. So I think that if the NHCAC wanted to help they would work with the Committee that has developed Carnival from the beginning to make it as important as it is today. If you can't work to help the Committee then give your support by enjoying Carnival. I know that there are deeply entrenched personal differences between the two committees, but just because you and another man don't see eye to eye, that don't mean you should try to take control of their scene and mash it up for everyone.

I suggest the NHCAC should have their own Carnival — some other time.

The press have certainly given air to views of the NHCAC. Members of the local black organisation were on TV after last year's Carnival, but I don't know what they had to do with Carnival then (except as booksellers and spectators).

There are the press reports that have prompted me to write this. I would like to ask Mr Louis Chase and the NHCAC what they are trying to do to Carnival when they say of Carnival:—

"Unpresented Disaster"
There will be a massive police presence.
"We have had a number of successful meetings with the police".
Evening Standard July 8, 1977.
"If there are two Carnivals I shudder to think what will happen".
The Observer July 10, 1977.

Last year's record was "Police and Thieves" Now I know who the thieves are. For This year I suggest "Babylon Trap Them".

Still, I am going to Carnival this year with no thoughts of confusion or division or the NHCAC in my mind. No matter what they say it's the people that make Carnival. Things and time will tell.

I hope I will be fit in body, but I know I will have the love of I people in I heart.

Dread Ray

THE ROAD MAKE TO WALK ON CARNIVAL DAY

The Battle for the West Indian Carnival in Britain

By Race Today Collective
Price 50p / $ 0.75

Carnival 1977 will be the 12th anniversary of the West Indian Carnival in Britain.

"The story of Carnival in Britain is a significant part of the history of the West Indian community, a community that has settled here and retained its cultural and political links with the international movement of black people. Carnival has now established itself as the most important, annual mass event, in the life of black Britain. It brings together over a quarter of a million Caribbean people on the streets of Notting Hill " **Introduction.**

In the pages of *Race Today*, over the past three years, we have publicised the origins of Carnival and the struggles fought to keep the Carnival on the streets of Notting Hill where it originated.

This pamphlet by the Race Today Collective is a collection of these articles outlining the origins, development and struggles to date.

Single copies plus postage + packing 65p / $0.85
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REVIEWS

The Future in the Present
Selected Writings by C. L. R. James
Allison and Busby
Price £2.95 paperback

C. L. R. James is one of those rare individuals whom history proves right. It is more than a misjudgement to think of him as a black professor, as a black historian, or indeed as the premier intellectual product of the West Indies. To think of him as such is to circumscribe and to limit the achievements of one of the marxist thinkers of our time who has kept the thread of the marxist science weaving through the internationalist concerns of a lifetime.

The essays in this book range in time from 1928 to 1971. The first inclusion is a short story, the last is an obituary on the death of George Jackson. In between, in his life as in the book, he turns his mind and activity to the case for West Indian self-government, to an early yet seminal and detailed comment on the betrayal by Stalin of the Chinese revolution, to an explication of the issues behind the British election of 1948, to Laski and St. Paul, to the significance of ancient Greek democracy, to the post-revolutionary society, to the Hungarian Workers' Councils as a harbinger of productive revolutionary organisation, to the meaning of Garfield Sobers for socio-cricket, to the strengths as satirist and commentator of the calypsonian Mighty Sparrow, to early revolts in Africa, to Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* . . . to an astonishing vitality of focus and variety of political concern.

In a commentary on Picasso's Guernica, or in a lecture to the University of the West Indies on the role of the artist in the Caribbean, in appreciating the literary development of Herman Melville, he demonstrates that his concern with literature or art is inevitably a concern with the social order that produces that art.

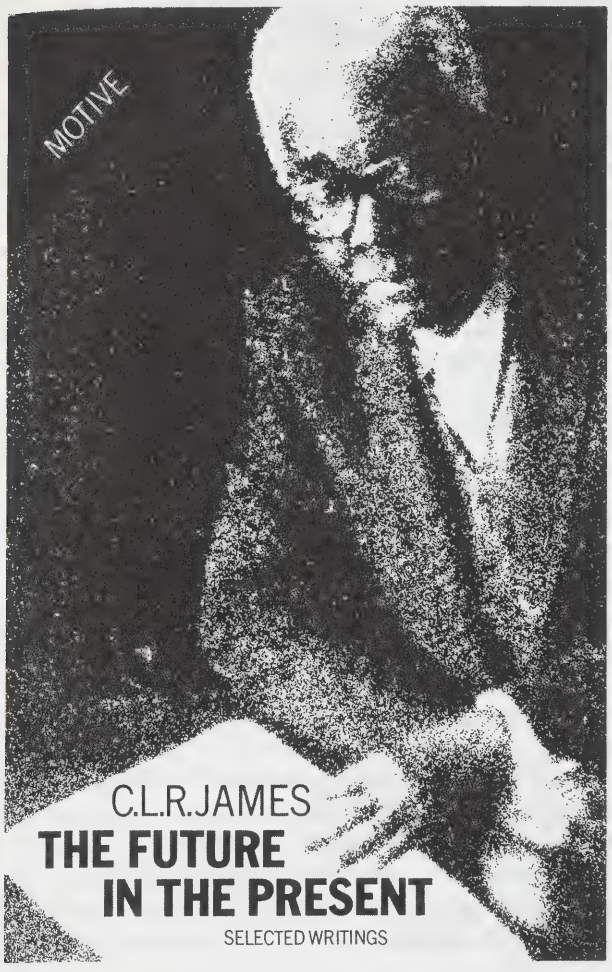
James has built a stairway in the house of marxist aesthetics. Without the least trace of the aesthetic humbug of the cognoscente he will assert that "*Moby Dick* the greatest masterpiece in the English language since Shakespeare will be universally seen as the first comprehensive statement in literature of the conditions and perspectives for the survival of Western Civilisation". The essay on fiction and reality, which brings to the assertion a detailed account of Melville's work, sees the novel, sees all artifacts of human creativity, as a society's way of expressing the self-movement in its past which will produce its future. Thus the Mighty Sparrow, a balladeer whose profession might be thought too humble to warrant the attentions of a mighty Leninist, is seen as the artist best able to epitomise and satirise the progress of West Indian life and politics. So also the essay on Sobers, complementing James' political autobiography, so much devoted to the meaning of cricket to the colonised Caribbean, *Beyond the Boundary*, takes the player as the symbol of the arrival of the Caribbean on the stage of what James constantly refers to as 'Western Civilisation'.

The publishers promise us two more volumes of selected writings. So for convenience, but not for the separation of readers into politicos and literati, we may divide the subject matter of the work into three sections. There is the commentary on significant human activity, be it cricket or poetry, which is as pioneering and more of a joy to read than Hemingway's philosophy on bull-fighting or Norman Mailer's literary shadow-boxing with the fight game. Then there are the historical essays which present unique and stringent analyses of the class struggle in Africa in the last 150 years, Britain in the 30's and 40's, Hungary in the days of the 1956 revolution, or indeed ancient Greece in its struggle to establish a democracy. The third focus, though never separated from a historical example, is the development of ideological clarity in a world beset after Lenin with false or partial prophets of the true socialist revolution.

Apart from these, the book contains a document called 'Down With Starvation Wages in South East Missouri'. Written during a sharecroppers' strike in 1942, it is a fine example of tactical journalism, one which knows what it wants, knows for whom it speaks and to whom it appeals.

Even categorised thus, the essays in the collection are not merely historical documents. Another reviewer may have quoted 50 paragraphs and posed the rhetorical question 'has not all this come to pass?'. We, however, are not in the business of political tipstering, but engaged in the task of attempting to give ideological and organisational form to the black struggle, located in Britain and generalised and inextricably linked with the world wide struggle of those who have nothing to sell but their labour power. **How can we use this book? No? to what ends can the historical commentary, scientific ideology, tactical journalism be put in our age?**

To answer that question, we must isolate the strengths of James' thinking. First and foremost, we feel that revolutionary journalism can profit from the example that James sets in confounding the accepted categories of what is political and what is not. In the central essay of the book 'The Revolutionary Answer to the Negro Problem', written in 1948, we have this: "There are all sorts of Negro groups and organisations every single one of which is dominated by the idea that each organisation must in some manner or other contribute to the emancipation of the Negroes from capitalist humiliation and from capitalist oppression." James is saying that the political formations which point to the future and those that will fight for the future are already in existence in the life of the mass community. There is no better justification for analysing the animus of a calypsonian, for tracing the career of a cricketer; or in 1977 for tracing the energies evident in a Carnival in Notting Hill or in an Asian Youth Festival in London. Life is a political garden. It is up to the



gardener to know which seed will grow and to separate the weeds from the plants.

Secondly, James is a resolute internationalist. Through his work one gets an insight into the parallels between the Greek democracy of the fifth century BC and the workers' councils of a Hungary in revolt against the totalitarian state apparatus of stalinism (a word he doesn't use). His is the informed internationalism of the twentieth century, not based on the emotions of solidarity or fellow feeling, but on the realisation that the African revolution will be illuminated by European history, that the Hungarian revolution was betrayed by the Western European working class, that the success of the Chinese revolution was at a point, hopelessly dependent on the money and world leadership that should have come from revolutionary Russia.

It is this calculated internationalism that causes him to explain the British election of 1948 to an American working class readership, that resolutely insists on providing the British working class, as far back as the 30's, the case for African independence and for West Indian self-determination.

Let us move from James the international marxist, to James the confirmed Leninist. The essay entitled 'The Class Struggle', taken from James' *State Capitalism And World Revolution,* analyses the development of the Soviet Union in the light of the last essays of Lenin. The argument flows through historical particulars about the unchanged character of the work process in the Russia of the 20's, to the problems facing the working class of America. His generalisations, from an observation of both economic systems, are valid and invaluable today: "The British Chancellor of the Exchequer, the stalinist bureaucracy, the whole capitalist class in the US, all declare that the problem of production today is the productivity of labour and the need to harness the human interest, i.e. the energy and ability of the worker. Many of them are aware that it is the labour process itself which is in question." Since that was written, a generation of young British blacks has posed that very question through their revolt. A careful analysis of every industrial revolt, from Fords Dagenham to the riots of Detroit to the urban struggles of the unemployed in London, New York, in Kingston and Port of Spain, fortifies that fundamental assertion. The crisis represents itself as absenteeism, as rapid labour turnover, as industrial sabotage, as the preference of hustle rather than wage-slavery. Such is the movement. James' contribution has been to place the politics of that movement firmly in the history of the revolutions of the industrialised world which must succeed the gigantic step of 1917.

We said before in this review that the central essay in the collection, for our purposes at least, is 'The Revolutionary Answer to the Negro Problem'. It was published in 1948 and is a restatement of the black question, perspective and programme which James placed before Trotsky in 1938 and which formed the basis of his break from the Trotskyist international. We are confident that while the international debated theoretically, James had, in true Leninist fashion, his ear to the cry in the streets. In his obituary on George Jackson (1971) he gives us the proof and the significance of this attentiveness "It is quite obvious that where Du Bois and myself were observing a situation, taking part organisationally in our various ways, but guided by theoretical, that is to say intellectual development, the generation to which Jackson belonged has arrived at the profound conclusion that the only way of life possible to them is the complete intellectual, physical, moral commitment to the revolutionary struggle against capitalism. They are a stage beyond all historical and theoretical writing, and I add here an opinion that in my travels about the United States I have met or been aware of thousands of young black people who could not express themselves in this manner, for Jackson is a born writer. But that is how they think, those are the principles on which they act, and as blacks they are not alone " Ditto our experience amongst young British blacks, though they have not yet produced a George Jackson.

This tribute, appropriate for a political obituary, is the fruit of prophecy. The 1938 argument runs thus:

> "We say, number one, that the Negro struggle, the independent Negro struggle, has a vitality and a validity of its own; that it has deep historic roots in the past of America and in present struggles; it has an organic political perspective, along which it is travelling to one degree or another, and everything shows that at the present time it is travelling with great speed and vigour.
>
> We say, number two, that this independent

Negro movement is able to intervene with terrific force upon the general social and political life of the nation, despite the fact that it is waged under the banner of democratic rights, and is not led necessarily either by the organised labour movement or the marxist party.

> We say, number three, and this is the most important, that it is able to exercise a powerful influence upon the revolutionary proletariat, that it has got a great contribution to make to the development of the proletariat in the United States, and that it is in itself a constituent part of the struggle for socialism."

Move away from the specificity of 'Negro' and the 'US'. Look at Britain. There is an independent movement of the labour force and its descendants who are here as a consequence of their colonial history in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Caribbean or Africa. If nothing else, the pages of *Race Today* over the last three years should demonstrate that it is moving with speed and vigour, independently of what we may term the conventional labour movement. If we trace the line of Asian revolt from Loughborough Hosiery Mills through Imperial Typewriters and thence to Grunwick, we can assure ourselves that it has intervened with terrific force on the general political life of the nation. The youths at Carnival were not led by the organised labour movement or the marxist party. Whether or not this movement has the potential, as James predicts, to exercise a "powerful influence upon the revolutionary proletariat", depends even now on the quality of leadership it can generate and the ability of its adherents to indicate to the white working class movement its strengths, methods, contribution. That already it is in itself a 'constituent part of the struggle for socialism' we do not doubt. James paraphrases Lenin on the question of leadership, and we may quote him to say why we do not doubt: "Small groups, nationalities, themselves powerless against imperialism, nevertheless can act as one of the ferments, one of the bacilli which will bring onto the scene the real fundamental force against capitalism the socialist proletariat." That's not a prophecy, it's a task.

Farrukh Dhondy,
Race Today Collective.

BOOKS FOR CHILDREN

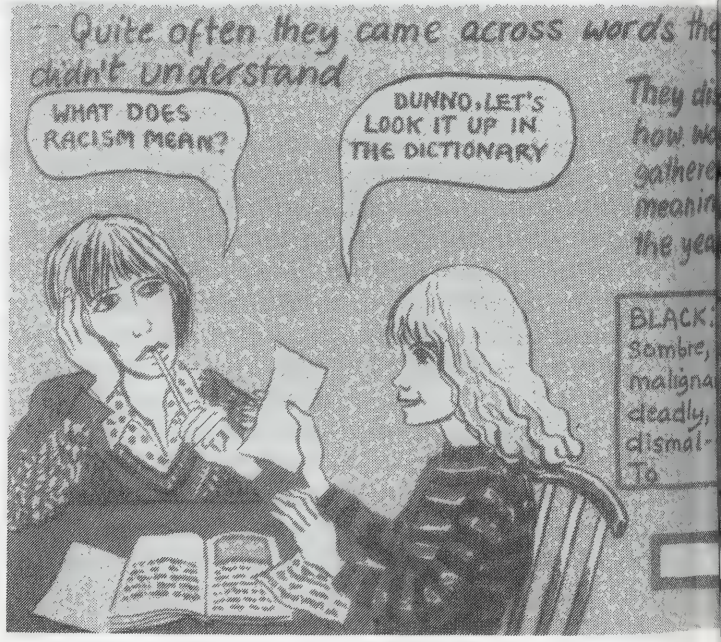
"Never before has black creative intelligence coincided so opportunely with the development of black pride, the advancement of political—cultural awareness, independence, and style to affect black art", wrote the distinguished black American writer for children, Virginia Hamilton, in an article *High John Is Risen Again (The Horn Book Magazine* April '75). And nowhere is this 'black creative intelligence' more evident than in the following new paperback books written for children.

M. C. Higgins the Great (Lions 60p) by Virginia Hamilton, is about Mayo Cornelius Higgins, M.C. for short. He is a black boy who lives with his family on Sarah's mountain, so named after his great grandmother who fled from slavery in the South and settled on the mountain to have her children. The Higgins' acknowledgement of, and pride in their family history is a constant theme of the book and Virginia Hamilton, herself the descendant of slaves, in this way, easily presents the realities and tradition of black history to the young reader.

This is a book about relationships and about the choices open to M. C. the adolescent. Hamilton pierces the surface of everyday events and encounters. M. C.'s love for his parents and in particular his changing relationship with his father are finely drawn as are his parents' feeling for each other and for their children.

With the intense understatement of its dialogue, this book is demanding, but, at the same time, so compelling, its world so totally imagined, that the young reader's perseverance will be richly rewarded.

"History . . . (is) . . . made by the mass", writes Julius Lester in the foreward to his *Long Journey Home* (Puffin 50p). First published in 1973, this book is a collection of six short stories about the ordinary black people who brought about the end of slavery. Five of the stories are about slaves either just before, or just after emancipation, each one



bringing in an aspect of black American history. Based on true life stories, *Satan On My Back* is about a blues singer who is always on the move, while *The Man Who Was a Horse* is the story of a black cowboy. Both are emotionally unable to collaborate in their own oppression.

Louis is about an escaped slave, helped to freedom by the Underground Railroad — the slaves' escape route to Canada. *Ben* deals with slavery from the point of view of a white liberal whose ideals do not last. *When Freedom Came* is the harrowing account of a man's bitter search after emancipation to be reunited with his wife and children, sold elsewhere by their master. The final and title story, *Long Journey Home*, takes the form of an old man's reminiscences of slavery told to his grandchild — and we are thus made aware of the folk memory of slavery being handed down from generation to generation, now given such public coverage in Alex Haley's *Roots*.

Julius Lester is a powerful writer whose lucid, beautiful prose is very accessible to young readers. This book is excellent and well served in this new edition by US illustrator Charles Lily's strong portrait of Rambler the blues singer on the jacket.

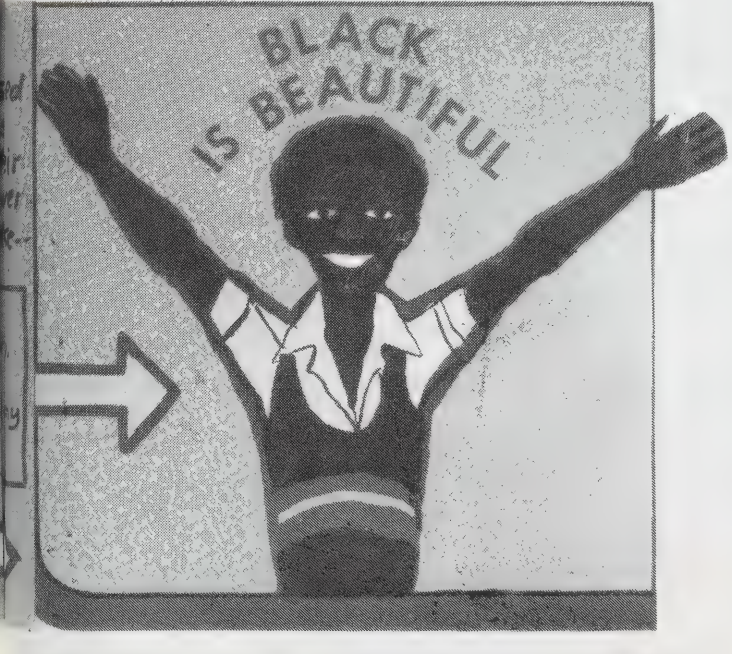
Also by Julius Lester, *Basketball Game* (Peacock 50p), set in Nashville in the 50's, is the story of a 14 year old black boy Allen, whose parents move into a white middle class part of town. Allen and Rebecca, the white girl next door, break the unwritten rules by becoming friends but it can't last. There are many young black Britons who will welcome Lester's sensitive exploration in fiction of a situation that is still all too familiar.

Phyllissia in *The Friends* (Puffin 60p) by Rosa Guy, is a West Indian newly arrived in New York to join her parents. She comes up against the aspirations that accompany immigration as much as the violence of her strife-torn Harlem school, her father's inappropriate and tyrannical conventions and finally the death of her mother. The home with its wall-to-wall carpeting and drapes and her alien parents with their formal speech are the back-drop to her friendship with Edith, a dynamic New Yorker — witty, loyal and brave in the face of poverty and the responsibility of her abandoned brother and sisters. How Phyllissia learns to accept the realities of New York and her family's position in it is the theme of this compelling book, written from a perspective that is truly Harlem's.

Just republished as a Puffin paperback is Andrew Salkey's well known story of Jamaica, *Hurricane* (Puffin 50p). It has a new and dramatic jacket by Julek Heller but lots of Papas' horrid illustrations inside. It's the story of Joe and his family getting safely through a hurricane during which time Joe 'grows up'. Tense and dramatic this book will continue to appeal to young readers but it has dated — viz its stereotyped view of sex roles ("Big men don't cry Papa" etc. etc.)

All these books are for readers of 10 and upwards.

Rosemary Stones,
(Children's Rights Workshop).



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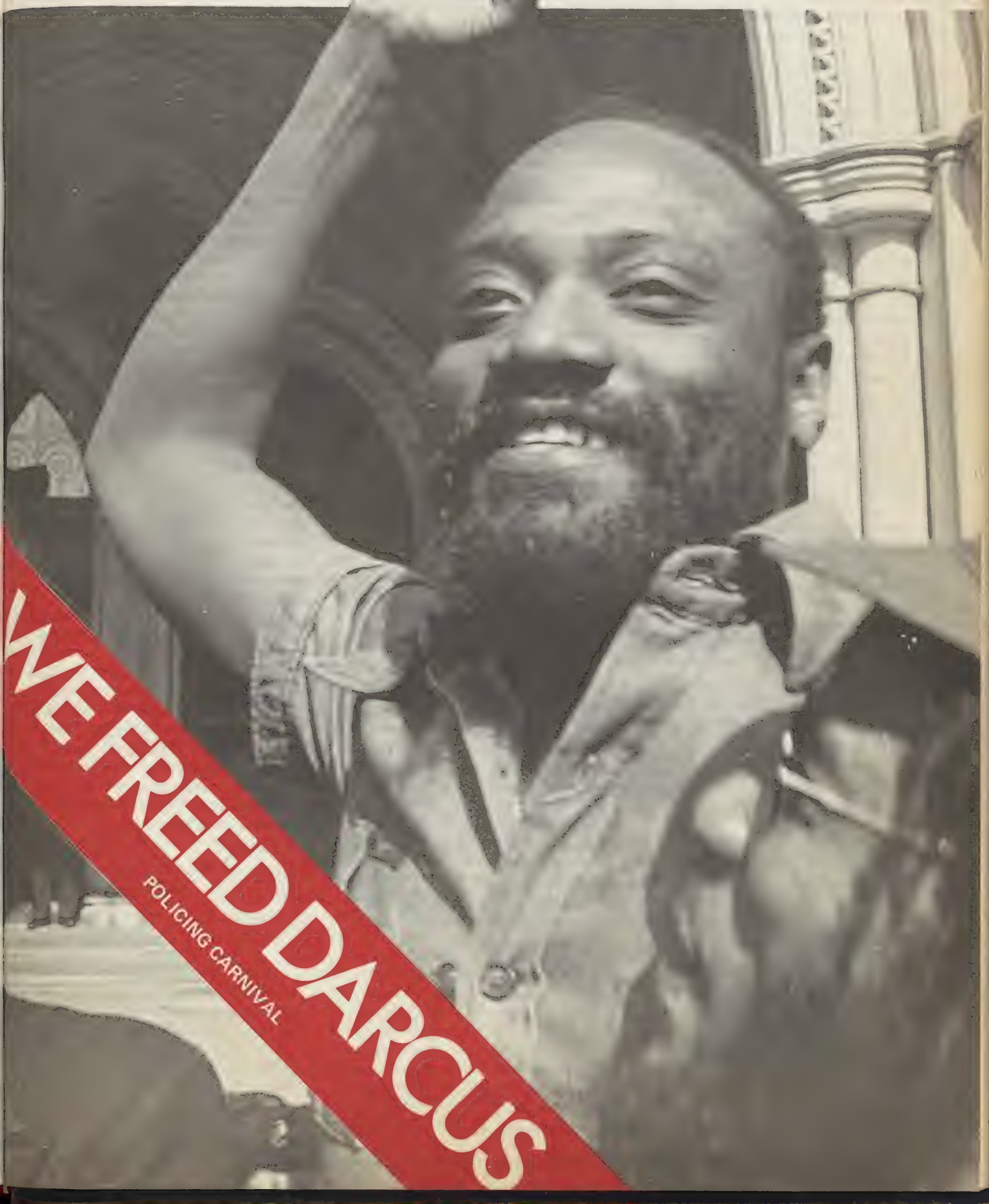
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NAME

ADDRESS

Race Today

VOICE OF THE BLACK COMMUNITY IN BRITAIN Sept/Oct. 1977 25p



WE FREED DARCUS

POLICING CARNIVAL

LETTERS

Dear Race Today,

Following the recent wave of fascist attacks on black and left-wing bookshops in London, there has been, over the Bank Holiday, the first attack on a shop outside London. The Fourth Idea Bookshop in Bradford had all its upstairs windows smashed (the downstairs window is already protected by a metal screen installed after an attack nine months ago). The attackers left their calling card. Three Bradford National Party leaflets saying "BNP We Will Win" had been pushed through the letter box.

On Tuesday August 30 the shop had a visit from a member of the BNP (a former NF candidate in the local council elections). He was recognised immediately by Reuben Goldberg, a voluntary worker in the bookshop, whereupon he left the premises. Three minutes later the phone rang, and the caller, who refused to to give his name, asked to speak to Reuben. Reuben took the call with somebody listening in and the voice at the other end said: "We'll burn you to the ground, you Jewish bastard, Heil Hitler". The voice was recognised as that of the BNP member who had just left the shop. Reuben is secretary of the Bradford Ad-Hoc Committee Against Fascism.

We are treating this as a threat of arson, particularly after the petrol fire at Centerprise two weeks ago.

If you want more information you can can contact me here at the shop between 10.30 am and 6.00 pm Mon-Sat. I'll let you know of any major developments.

Lesley Semmens,
The Fourth Idea Bookshop,
Bradford.

Dear Race Today,

We have found *Race Today's* coverage and analysis of the Grunwick strike extremely useful to us in Canada and Quebec, where the media have reported extensively on the strike.

In recent months, workers here have also seen the effective use of the withdrawal of their labour as a weapon to improve wages and working conditions undermined by the massive mobilisation of police to protect scabs. In one case, company-hired goons shot eight Pickets in Montreal.

While we have no direct experience or inside knowledge of the Grunwick strike, our experience as white workers in the industrial workers movement here leads us to question whether your editorial in the June/July issue accurately characterises why thousands of white workers, from powerful sections of the British working class, have fought alongside 250 Asians strikers at Grunwick.

Your editorial argues, correctly in our view, that the Grunwick strikers are struggling, not for unionisation as an end in itself, but rather as a weapon to wrest better wages and working conditions from the employer. But the editorial seems to suggest that the white workers, who are actively supporting the strike, may not be as clear that workers' struggles are "directed at gaining material demands beyond unionisation".

This suggestion obscures the motives and material interests of these white workers, as well as the concrete process by which a strike by 250 Asians in a small sweat shop has become a major battleground in the war between the British state and large sections of the industrial working class over the future of the social contract. The split you describe within the trade unions over the Grunwick strike largely coincides with the split over the social contract. It is no coincidence that the same sections of the white working class, which are active at Grunwick and in opposing the TUC/Labour government's attempt to restrict mass picketing, are also fighting against the social contract, led by the miners' claim for an 85% wage increase.

In 1972 and 1974, the miners blasted major holes in the British state's income policy, which many other sections of the working class marched through in their turn. The effective use of flying mass pickets, to shut down coal-consuming power stations, was a crucial factor in winning the '72 strike. The mass picket at the Saltley coke depot, supported by a sympathy strike of 40,000 Birmingham-area industrial workers, stands as the turning point in the strike and a high point of the working class offensive that year.

The importance of mass pickets, as a practical weapon to make strikes effective, and as a focus for working class solidarity, has not been lost on the British state. Since 1972, it has tried to use instances of mass picketing as the occasion to introduce measures to restrict picketing, as happened during the 1974 building workers' strike when 24 Shrewsbury workers received jail sentences for picket activities. The new picketing rules proposed by Employment Minister Booth during the Grunwick strike — including prohibiting non-strikers from picketing— is the most recent attempt by the state to destroy the strike and picket line as an effective working class weapon.

It seems to us that the struggle against these attempts to undercut weapons of class power, at the precise time that many sections of the working class are lining up to take a shot at the social contract, is an important factor explaining the mobilisation of militant sections of the white working class to defend the picket line and struggle of the Grunwick strikers.

It is important to clarify the different bases of power that different sections of the white working class are operating from in order to see how to relate to the particular strengths and weaknesses of the white working class. In London's East End, for example, the break-up of powerful working class communities around the the docks, and the high rate of unemployment, have weakened the basis of power of white workers to fight the state, resulting in the tendency among sections of white workers there to perceive black immigrants as competitors for scarce jobs and the source of the social disintegration of their communities. On the other hand, the basis of power of the mining communities has strengthened in recent years, and along with other powerful sections of white workers, miners have been strong enough to direct their attack at the state.

At a time when some white workers are fighting Asian workers in the streets and flirting with National Front racism, it is important to be clear why other white workers are fighting alongside Asian workers, not merely to uphold an abstract right to unionisation, but to advance their own material interests as well as those of Asian workers.

Fraternally,
Jim Brophy, Montreal, Quebec.
John Huot, Toronto, Canada.

Cover photograph Julian Stapleton

EDITORIAL

POLICING CARNIVAL

Once Carnival 1976 was over, the Metropolitan Police, under Home Office guidance, began preparing for Carnival '77. They, the police, had to face two simple truths. Firstly, that their military organisation on the streets of Notting Hill was defeated by young blacks, and in full view of the entire population. Secondly, again in full view of the entire population, they were seen not to have the consent of blacks to police our communities. Confidence in the police was at an all time low.

It is against this background that they formulated a strategy for 1977. That strategy began to unfold in the several meetings between the Carnival organisations and police officers; and from information attracted from sources motivated by the strength and power of the black rebellion and the Carnival movement.

Finally, events on the day itself would be proof positive of what the police sought to do.

In order to avoid the military defeat they suffered in 1976, they took a series of steps. Acting Commander Patterson, who led the forces in 1976, was transferred from his Notting Hill patch. He was a failure and had to be dispensed with.

The dustbin lids and milk crates, which officers used to defend themselves in 1976, were to be replaced by new equipment. Riot shields, new helmets, tear gas and guns with night sights were ordered from the Ministry of Defence.

Careful reconnoitring of the terrain by senior police officers, witnessed by Notting Hill residents, added the military precision which replaced the haphazard planning of 1976.

And most important of all, a strict secrecy about the military build up required the cooperation of the national press; and the police were able to get it. Fleet Street editors defended their collaboration with the police chiefs by putting forward the line that they wanted to publish nothing that would exacerbate tension — not even the truth! In meetings with both Carnival committees, police officers absolutely refused to give any details about what their policing methods would be.

And now for the issue of consent. The police had lost the consent of the black population for their presence in our communities, and specifically in the Carnival itself. Both Carnival committees reinforced this by publicly demanding a low police profile. Such was the support for a low profile that it was impossible for the police to field hundreds of officers in full view of the Carnival crowd. No immediate on the spot policing was possible. In short, they could not repeat 1976 when hundreds of police mingled with the crowds and carried out several arrests. Yet, they would not and could not allow a Carnival without any policing at all. They had to find others to do the job. Who better than blacks themselves?

Always in meetings between the police and Carnival organisers they, the police, were most concerned with the stewarding arrangements. The issue reached a head on July 18, in a meeting between the Carnival committees, the local council and the police. Stewarding appeared on the agenda, and after a heated exchange, the Carnival Development Committee's (CDC) representatives demanded that stewarding be taken off the agenda unless the police outlined their strategy for policing Carnival and the numbers they were going to field.

"How could we discuss how many stewards we are likely to field", asked the CDC, "when we have no idea of what policing arrangements will be?"

Eventually, the Notting Hill Carnival and Arts Trust (NHCAC) came to the rescue. Having publicised and won money for their ability to field 13 bands and several sound systems, they were seen to do neither. They gathered some 20,000 youths under the fly-over with the one sound as entertainment. They fielded no more than two bands. Consequently, a mass of youth, with little or no entertainment and no refreshment, were abandoned to making excitement for themselves; an easy target surrounded by an army of police officers.

Having failed to entertain, they would contain and violate. At £20 a time the NHCAC recruited stick wielding goondas who were to carry out the job no section of the Metropolitan police force could manage. Like the police, they had no consent. Brute force reigned. The violence and brutality, inflicted indiscriminately by the stewards on young blacks, were worse than any that the police have inflicted on the black population to date. And all in full view of the police who did not bat an eyelid.

As darkness fell, the police, militarily equipped and with a thorough appreciation of the terrain, made their grand sweep, making arrests in some cases and in others, simply inflicting vicious blows on bystanders.

The police had come, oh yes, determined to establish themselves as the superior force on the day. And they did, thanks to the cooperation of the Notting Hill Carnival and Arts Trust. A Knighthood for Louis Chase? Not yet, maybe an O.B.E.

Race Today Collective September/October 1977.

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CARNIVAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE COMPETITION AND PRIZES

Band of the Year:	**Witches' Opera — Ebony — £200**
King of the Bands:	**Beast from Zoltar — Pepi Francis — Ebony — £150**
Queen of the Bands:	**Queen of the Witches — Doreen Charles — Ebony — £150**
Best Individual:	**'Fire, Fire — The Beast' — Hermit Innis — Ebony — £70**
Calypso King:	**The Mighty Volcano — £200**
Best Beating Steelband:	**Metronomes — £200 — Kitchener's Hasley Crawford**

Darcus Howe, Editor of *Race Today*, was sentenced to three months imprisonment and ordered to pay £100 towards the prosecution's costs after he was found guilty of assault occasioning actual bodily harm to a white barrister. An international protest movement responded with telegrams, petitions and demonstrations. Within a week the British State, through its judicial arm, set Darcus free. They were not willing, at this time, to confront an international movement.

Darcus recounts the background to the case and the details of his trial.

Tuesday, May 25, Notting Hill Underground Station:
Paul Camp, a white barrister, is making his way home to Linden Gardens from his chambers in Kings Bench Walk. He is carrying his brief case in one hand and an umbrella in the other. His wife is with him.

What they both claimed they saw and did, and my response to them set in motion a sixteen month haul, beginning with my arrest on that evening on a charge of assault occasioning actual bodily harm to Paul Camp, through committal proceedings at Knightsbridge Crown Court before judge and jury, and finally to Pentonville prison as her majesty's guest.

Camp gave his first account of the evening's events in a signed, handwritten statement at the Notting Hill Police Station.

He was approaching the exit gate at Notting Hill Underground station, he said, when he saw a black man punch the ticket collector twice in the face. A coloured inspector approached the black attacker and was pushed away. The black attacker was fairly excited and shouting. He, Camp, approached the black attacker and told him to stop. The attacker then punched him in the eye and kicked him in his testicles. There was an exchange of blows. The attacker then spat in his face and abused him. His wife called the police and the attacker was arrested.

He, Camp, was taken to St. Charles Hospital and there were no serious injuries.

The police at Notting Hill, armed with Camp's statement and Camp's statement alone, proceeded to charge me with assault occasioning actual bodily harm to Paul Camp, the the bodily harm being the black eye. ABH, as the charge is popularly titled, falls within the Offences Against the Persons Act 1861, Sec. 47, and carries a maximum penalty of five years if tried before a judge and jury and six months if tried before a magistrate.

On the morning of May 26, I was bailed at Notting Hill Police Station in the sum of £50, my own recognaisance, to appear at the Marylebone Magistrates' Court on June 15, 1976.

At my first appearance before the magistrate, I was given the option of having the case tried summarily in the magistrate's Court or indictably before judge and jury. I chose the latter, and nowhere are the reasons as well stated as in a public statement issued by the Black Parents Movement of which I am a member:

> "The magistrate's courts are rubber stamps for the police, and each day of the experiences of the black youth in the courts, of the older working class in the courts confirms us in that experience, that the magistrate's courts are a rubber stamp for the police."

We opted for trial by judge and jury. Having settled that issue, a date for the committal proceedings was fixed – August 25, 1976 at the Marleybone Magistrates' Court. There, the magistrate hearing the proceedings must decide whether the defendant has a case to answer before judge and jury.

In preparing for the committal proceedings, the police must issue a full script of all available evidence to the defendant. To this end I was served with Camp's statement, a medical report from the hospital and a statement from the arresting officer on the details of the arrest. Both Camp and the arresting officer were summoned to give evidence at the committal. I defended myself; a barrister appeared for the prosecution.

Camp took the witness stand. He repeated all the allegations in the original statement, allegations, which if went unchallenged, would justifiably taint me with the label hooligan par excellence.

We proceed to cross examine Camp.

"When you approached me, did you touch or assault me in anyway?"

"No I did not. I told you it would be better if you stopped. I mentioned I was a barrister because I thought some vague connection with law and order would make you stop."

"Are you sure I punched the ticket collector or merely pushed him?"

"I saw you hitting him with your fist. I am sure about that."

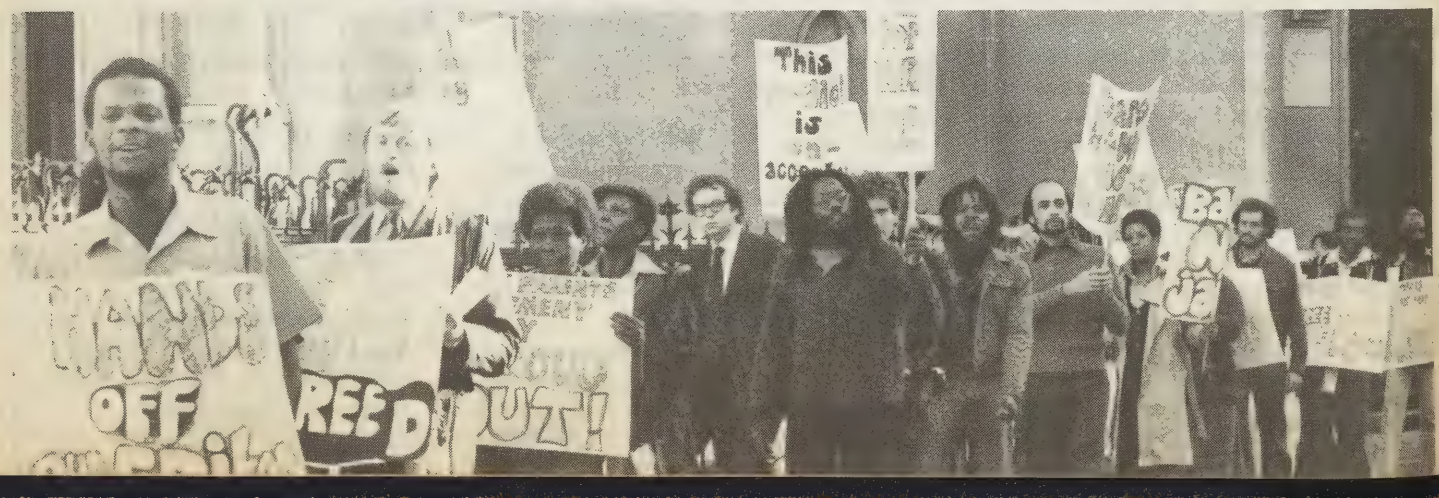
"When you told me to stop what was I doing?"

"You were standing against the wall of the tube exit. At this stage you were doing nothing."

"Did you have an umbrella on the day?"

"Yes I did."

SELF DEFENCE IS NO OFFENCE



Julian Stapleton

"Where is it?"
"It was torn and I threw it away?"
"Did you use it in the fight at all?"
"Yes I did. I hit you with it. I was aiming for your head region. I struck you once. I suppose it's fair enough to call it a weapon. Apart from your feet you used no weapon at all."
"Why did you omit to mention the umbrella attack in your statement made half-an-hour after the attack, when everything was fresh in your mind?"
"I don't know why I didn't mention the umbrella incident. I don't remember telling the police. No, I didn't discuss that part of it with them."
"Why did you think the police arrested me?"
"I suggested to him to arrest you. I was thinking of the original attack on the ticket collector. I did not see our fight as the central issue."

Next witness and Mrs Camp is called. No statement of hers was ever served on me and I ask the magistrate for clarification. We are told that she was interviewed one month later and failure to serve her statement was a bureaucratic mess-up. She is allowed to give her evidence.

She was approaching the exit with her husband when she saw me push the ticket collector back into the box. Her husband gave her his briefcase to hold. He kept his umbrella. He approached me and told me to stop. I punched him, kicked him, threw him to the floor. He never retaliated once. The defendant was aggressive but perfectly polite to her. She asked her husband if he was alright. He said yes, he could cope.

She too was cross-examined.
"Did you see the entire incident?"
"Yes, I saw everything?"
"Did your husband strike any blows?"
"No he never did. He did not retaliate."
"It would be wrong if someone were to say we exchanged blows?"
"Yes it would. My husband only put up his hand to ward off the blows from his face."
"Did your husband have an umbrella."
"Yes he did."
"What happened to it?"
"It fell to the ground."
"Did he use it at all in the fight as a weapon perhaps?"
"No he did not. I am sure he did not use it."
"If anyone were to say that your husband used the umbrella to strike me with, that person would be a liar?"
"Yes that person would be lying."
"Tell me Mrs Camp, did you see me punch the ticket collector or merely push him?"
"You pushed him."

Then followed the arresting officer with details of the arrest. I reserved my defence. It is my right. Finally, the magistrate concluded that there was a case to answer and I was committed to take my trial at the Knightsbridge Crown Court.

October 15 1976: I am served with additional police evidence. Sgt. Clark of the Notting Hill Gate Police Station arrived at the offices of *Race Today* and served the statement of Patrick Conlan, the ticket collector.

Now for the trial itself.

Knightsbridge Crown Court, Court 5, September 5, 1977:

Judge Clover is sitting. A quick investigation among legal friends reveal that he is little known. One source claims that he is a divorce judge standing in for criminal judges who are on holiday.

The court is convened and the jury empanelled. All white. There are no blacks in the general panel from which the final twelve are to be selected

Colin Pitt appears for the prosecution and I am defending myself.

The court would have to resolve those questions which have arisen through the history of the proceedings:

Firstly, what took place prior to Camp's intervention?
Secondly, who struck the first blow?
Thirdly, why were both Camp and his wife so eager to conceal the umbrella incident?
Fourthly, what was the social and political climate surrounding the events of May 25? In short, the circumstantial evidence.

The prosecution called their first witness, the ticket collector, Patrick Conlan; the only witness they had who could throw light on the first question. Conlan was interviewed five months after the incident. Although there were several members of the public present when the police arrived, no one else was interviewed.

Conlan entertained. His outbursts and statements from the witness box provoked the public gallery sometimes to laugh openly. He was collecting tickets at the exit gate when I approached him with a ticket. He ushered me to the entrance gate, whereupon, I swept his change off the ledge of his box, punched him twice in the face, dragged him out of the box and, in a wrestler's throw, tossed him some seven feet. Yes, he was wearing spectacles at the time and managed to keep them on through this ordeal. No, he needed no medical treatment. Yes, he was back in his box collecting tickets within a minute. He never assaulted me, never abused me racially or otherwise. No, there was no reason whatever for the attack.

Camp and his wife followed. Who struck the first blow? Camp gave his wife his briefcase to hold. He did not know why he kept his umbrella. He approached me, never laid a finger on me, never poked and prodded me menacingly, having been warned to lay off. Yes, he used the umbrella, but in self defence.

He was asked again,
"why in your statement to the police, why in your examination in chief in Marylebone Magistrate's Court did you refuse to volunteer the information that you used your umbrella as a weapon?"
He replied,
"When giving a statement to the police in these matters one is supposed to be biased, isn't one?"
Finally, Camp admitted, under cross-examination, that " on hindsight I should never have intervened."

His wife would have no part of the lie that I punched Conlan. She insisted that I pushed him; nor would she share her husband's evidence that on approaching me he never touched me at all.

"Yes, he did", said Mrs Camp.
"Could you demonstrate?"
And poor Mrs Camp got in a mess over the demonstration.
"It was like this," she said, half opening, half closing her fist. Finally, she settled for a pat on the shoulder, a gesture shared by two comrades meeting after a long separation.

She was now prepared to accept that her husband used the umbrella. When it was put to her at Marylebone Magistrate's Court, she denied it vehemently, to the extent that she was willing to call anyone who made the suggestion a liar. She admitted having discussions with her husband on the umbrella incident after she had given evidence in the magistrates' court.

It was now my turn to enter the witness box.

I spent May 25 at Lords Cricket ground in the company of my eldest daughter. I took her home at the end of the day and was making my way, via Notting Hill station, to our

offices in Brixton. I bought a ticket and headed for the exit gate, seeking to avoid the automatic machines which I hate. Conlan, at the exit gate, struck me across the stomach, tugged my sleeves and followed with a torrent of racial abuse. "Where the fuck do you think you are going, you black cunt?" Enoch Powell's speech, warning of the black menace, had been delivered only the day before. Every national newspaper carried large, bold headlines. Conlan would be his standard bearer at Notting Hill Underground.

I walked past Conlan and lodged a complaint with the black inspector. He shrugged his shoulders. I returned to Conlan.

"Never ever put your hands on me or my kind again." More abuse followed.

"Fuck off you black cunt etc etc." I swept the loose change off his box with my ticket. Conlan retaliated with two punches and started advancing from his box. I pushed him back twice before being held by the black inspector.

"He is not worth it", advised our inspector. We both retreated to the wall near the exit. I was just about reordering my dishevelled clothing. The matter was finished and I was about to continue my journey.

Our hero emerges. Camp approached me, an umbrella in his left hand. He poked me several times with his index finger.

"Behave your bloody self, I am a barrister."

"You could be the Prime Minister of England," I replied, "Piss off". He continued his poking and prodding. I pushed him away. He lashed out with the umbrella. I ducked the first blow and he followed with a second and a third. My right hand was paralysed after he connected with a fierce blow. It was at this point that I began defending myself in earnest. Camp got what he deserved. Once the umbrella fell out of his hand I stopped.

A passerby, a young female teacher, gave evidence in support and repeated flawlessly my version of the evening's events. An independent witness if ever there was one. She admitted under cross examination that she taught at an immigrant centre; that she read *Race Today;* that she heard me give a lecture at the Institute of Education. It was the prosecution's weapon against her.

"I do not know how to put this Miss Jennings," intoned the prosecution, "you, er er er have a sympathy for er er people like er er the defendant. Miss Jennings was now tainted, a nigger lover. It was suggested that her evidence was flawless because she conspired with me, and was so motivated because of her sympathies.

Colin Pitt made his closing speech, three quarters of which was spent on Miss Jennings' evidence. For me he reserved the adjectives, arrogant, anti-authority, touchy.

I closed, pointing out the contradictions in the prosecution's evidence, emphasising that my own injuries were much greater than Camp's, and letting the jury know that the present political climate was shaped by the fact that blacks were refusing to put up with increasing racial attacks; that my case fell into this category and I offered no apologies for what I had done. Given identical circumstances I would do the same again.

Clearly, my closing speech impressed the jury. I had a clear hour long run and made use of it. At the end I looked to the public gallery. A barrister friend nodded his approval; we had the case sewn up, provided that is, that Judge Clover remained on course.

Clover began his summing up, my closing speech obviously fresh in the jury's minds.

"Now as a judge", blundered Clover, "I want to tell you what I think about criminal trials. You have heard the speeches of the prosecution and the defence. I do not like speeches at all. I think you ought simply to have to listen to the evidence and the directions I give. But it is a matter over which I have no control. However you will be well advised to pay minimum attention to speeches and maximum attention to me and the evidence."

Clover then proceeded to explain, strengthen and justify the prosecution's case in one of the most biased summing up speeches I have ever heard. At one point, bewildered, I thought "what is he going to such lengths for." He sounded as though the defence of Queen and country was at stake. His was a better prosecution's closing speech than Pitt, the prosecutor, could manage.

Within fifteen minutes the jury returned a guilty verdict.

Clover was told that I had no previous convictions. That did not deter him from what he had set out to do:

"I am sorry to see you where you are, but you lost your temper, you were touchy and arrogant and society cannot allow acts of violence to go unpunished, especially in a public place.

There is no excuse and I want to make quite clear the attitude of the court in this matter. You are sentenced to three months imprisonment and you will pay £100 towards the prosecution's costs."

Clover has to be explained — his vicious and biased summing up, the unprecedented severity of his sentence. Were these the rantings of an eccentric judge? Was it the singling out of an individual known for his opposition to the established order?

Neither theory fits. Clover's history and his record disproves the first. The second, taken in isolation as a conspiracy theory, falls flat against the background of recent political events.

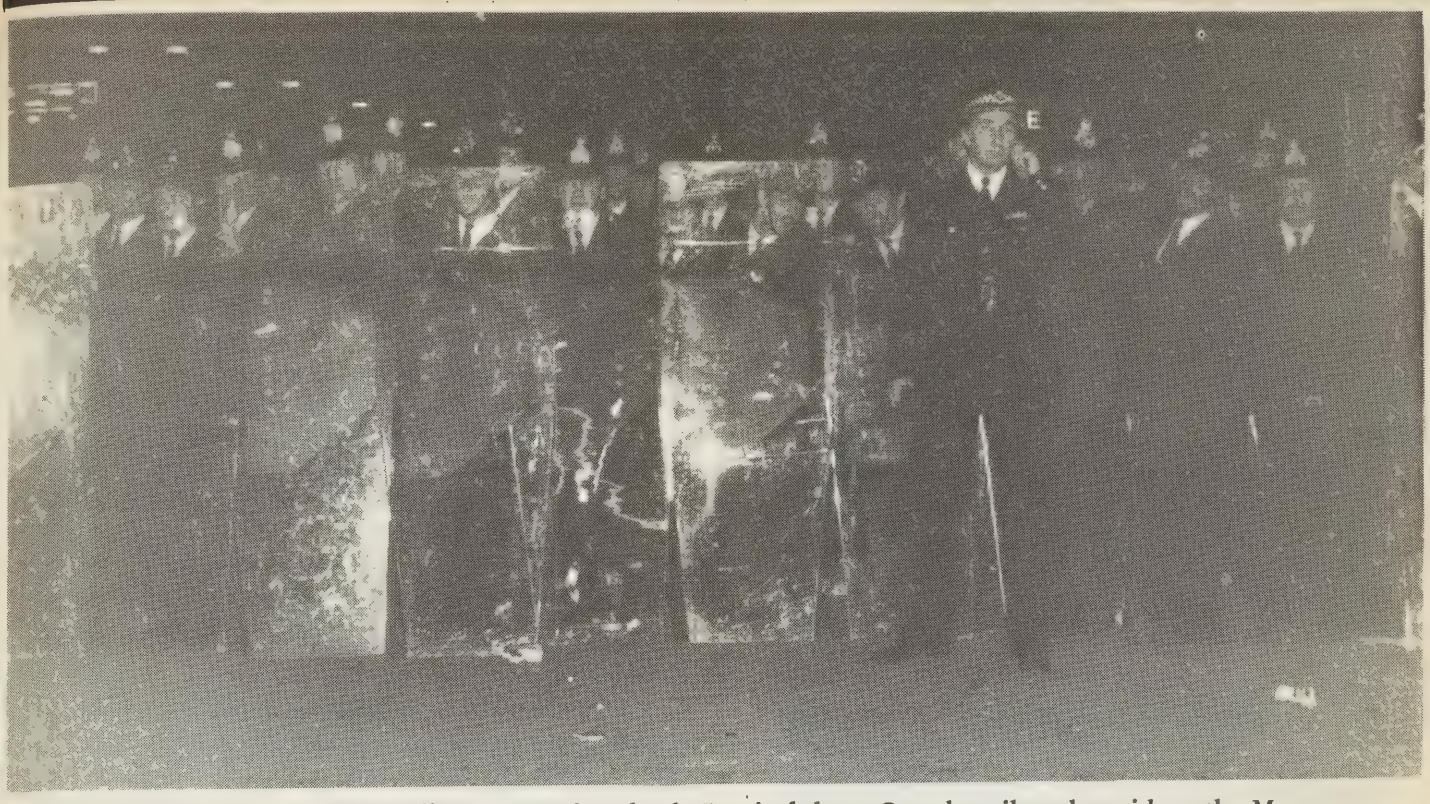
Britain's major cities are seized by semi-urban warfare on the race question. Increasingly, sections of the black community are intervening in pitched battles against the police and white racists. The black community has, by our actions, shown a total lack of confidence in the capacity of the institutions of justice and the law enforcement agencies to protect us against racial hostility, discrimination and violence. The movement is growing around the position that we must protect ourselves from police and racists alike.

Sections of the judiciary, politicians and police have set themselves the task of inflicting a defeat on our movement. A severe sentence for a first offence on the editor of an international journal would highlight and give publicity to a policy which they have been pursuing relentlessly in the last few years. Judge Clover, operating from Knightsbridge and his cronies in other courts are the sharp end of the sword.

From my cell in Pentonville I knew the fight had only just begun. The *Race Today* Collective would reply, drawing strength from forces on the international terrain which we have mapped out, identified, and described and analysed in the last four years.

Telegrams and petitions from East Dry River, Port of Spain, Trinidad to Detroit; from Bradford to Montreal; from Bombay to Kingston, Jamaica flooded the Home Secretary's office. It was **Up Tempo** as *Race Today* activists would say. My imprisonment would be used equally to highlight our movement's political line, **Self Defence Is No Offence.**

We secured the fastest appeal in legal history. Within one day of lodging the appeal, we came up before the single judge, and three days later, before the full court of appeal. Judge Lawton made his political speech on increasing violence in "our cities". After a ten minute harangue, the three judges found that because of the staleness of the case, 16 months, I should be released forthwith. **MAN FREE.**



Julian Stapleton

Two reports illustrate how the police operated on both Carnival days. One describes the raid on the Mangrove Restaurant; the other, written by two young blacks, is a close observation of the crowd behaviour, the activities of the stewards and the police strategy on the streets.

POLICING THE CARNIVAL

INVASION OF THE MANGROVE

The Mangrove restaurant in All Saints Road, Notting Hill, has always been a favoured vantage point in the area from which to see and hear the mas and steelbands of Carnival.

Every year, at Carnival, the management runs its own private steelband competition, with two members of the steelband community as judges. All the steelbands participating in Carnival pass by the Mangrove and this fact alone inevitably attracts many hundreds of people there, particularly those with children. In addition it sells food and drink and toilet facilities are available. This year, the Mangrove had its own group of stewards who, over the two days, had successfully diverted rebel youths from the immediate area and had done so without the use of sticks and clubs.

As the festivities approached the Carnival last lap, All Saints Road was jammed with revellers of all ages. Melody Makers steelband, which had participated in the Mangrove competition earlier, had returned to salute the revellers. The jump-up and wind-down was in the best traditions of Carnival. The only indication of trouble had been the appearance of a gang of youths who had wanted to enter the restaurant, but the stewards had effectively packed them off elsewhere, with little difficulty. Otherwise, everybody was totally unaware that a police army was on its way.

It entered All Saints Road from Lancaster Road in two groups. Police buses immediately sealed off that end of the road and the Westbourne Park Road end as as well. They formed themselves in lines.across the width of the street and swept along All Saints Road, chanting a war cry using their truncheons to beat out a a military rhythmn on their riot shields. People began running hysterically in all directions, screaming. The only places of refuge were nearby doorways and buildings. The Mangrove was packed to capacity with terrified children and horrified adults.

The invasion force approached the Mangrove, beating on its plate glass window with truncheons. Frank Critchlow, owner of the restaurant attempted to appeal to a Sgt. to call off his troops. He was clubbed over the head from behind by a police baton. Stewards inside tried to hold the door but it was broken down. A gang of between 15 to 20 policemen charged in, beating the people inside, yelling at everybody to get out. Some people were literally pushed through the back window, which has a 14ft drop. Basil and his Black Patch sound-system has a fine collection of calypso and steelband records. He has provided these sounds at the Mangrove during Carnival for some years now. His amplifier, costing some hundreds of pounds and many of his records, on which no price can easily be put, were smashed to pieces by the police. Basil recounts:

"The first I heard was somebody shouting that the police are outside chasing people. Somebody else shouted to close the door. Next thing I knew was a charge. The window next to the door was smashed by truncheons beating on it and then they came in. They started beating everybody and telling us to get out, but we couldn't because the door was cordoned off. I was thrown across the room. Police smashed my amplifier on to the floor and tossed my records all about. There was a couple with a child near to me and I protested to the police to let them get out. Apart from my amplifier, at least 48 singles were were smashed and five LPs which you can't buy in this country at all. It's just nonsensical to me that the police come into a place in that way, beating people and smashing property and making no arrests."

A young white man had spent most of the day in the area outside the Mangrove and was also badly injured in the invasion. This is his story!

". . . No attempt was made to arrest anybody. In fact, the raid appeared to have no purpose whatsoever. The raid shocked everybody as the Mangrove had been considered a place of refuge and safety both from muggers and police. No one attempted to defend themselves. . . Eventually I was thrown into the street by the police. Blood was pouring from my head and, as it was covering my eyes, I couldn't see clearly. I was directed towards an ambulance and told to get into it. However, it contained two injured police and another policeman who told me to get out. I tried to get out but was pushed back in by police outside. In the course of the next few minutes I was pushed in and out of the ambulance a total of three times, and I was kicked by the police outside for not getting in. Eventually the ambulance drove off.

The police were still running up and down the street. A few bottles were being thrown but they did not appear to be aimed in any particular direction. Most of them fell several yards from anyone. As the area now seemed a bit calmer I crossed the road and found my friend. She was shocked at my appearance and helped me to an ambulance. We got in, together with another man who had been hit on the head. The ambulance then drove off, past the Mangrove. Outside it was stopped by a group of people who begged the driver to stop and take a friend whose face was badly injured. Also a girl whose arm was in so much pain she could not sit still. The ambulance man gave her gas. . . Her arm was in fact broken in two places. The man with the injured face said that he had been thrown through the window of the restaurant from the inside by the police and glass had gone in his right eye. He may lose it. A girl, whose wrists were so badly cut she couldn't move her two middle fingers on her left hand, said she too had been thrown through the window. I had four stitches to my forehead. One girl was kept in overnight with an injured head and another man. He was not able to talk, so I don't know what had happened to him."

In all, some 20 people received serious injuries and had to receive hospital treatment.

The savage manner of the police invasion and the fact that no arrests were made, had left everybody in no doubt that what took place was part of a planned attack by the police on the Carnival. Although it was agreed, through negotiations with the CDC that the festivities would continue until 11 pm on both nights of Carnival, from approximately 8.30 pm, an army of police, operating from various points, began a military sweep through the entire area to clear the streets of Carnival revellers and bands. In some instances they were met with pockets of resistance from groups of youths, who engaged them on a hit-and-run basis, but their strategy was quite clearly to arrest the Carnival, under cover of darkness.

As well as destroying the propaganda that the police kept a low-profile during Carnival, it has also come to light that, at the hospitals selected to deal with the victims of police violence, sections of the medical staff were co-ordinating with the police on background details of the injured. Police were wandering quite freely through the treatment areas and, in some cases, attempting to get people to give them their names and addresses and statements.

Frank Critchlow has made a formal complaint through his solicitor to the Complaints Investigation Bureau at Scotland Yard. Even so, officers at Scotland Yard have been phoning him personally at the restaurant, hoping to persuade him to give them a statement. He believes that they are anxious to find someone who will say that the police were provoked into the attack.

WHAT WE SAW

On Carnival Sunday we dropped in at Ladbroke Grove to see what was going on. Getting into Ladbroke Grove was difficult. Most of the streets were blocked off by police motor-cyclists and no entry signs.

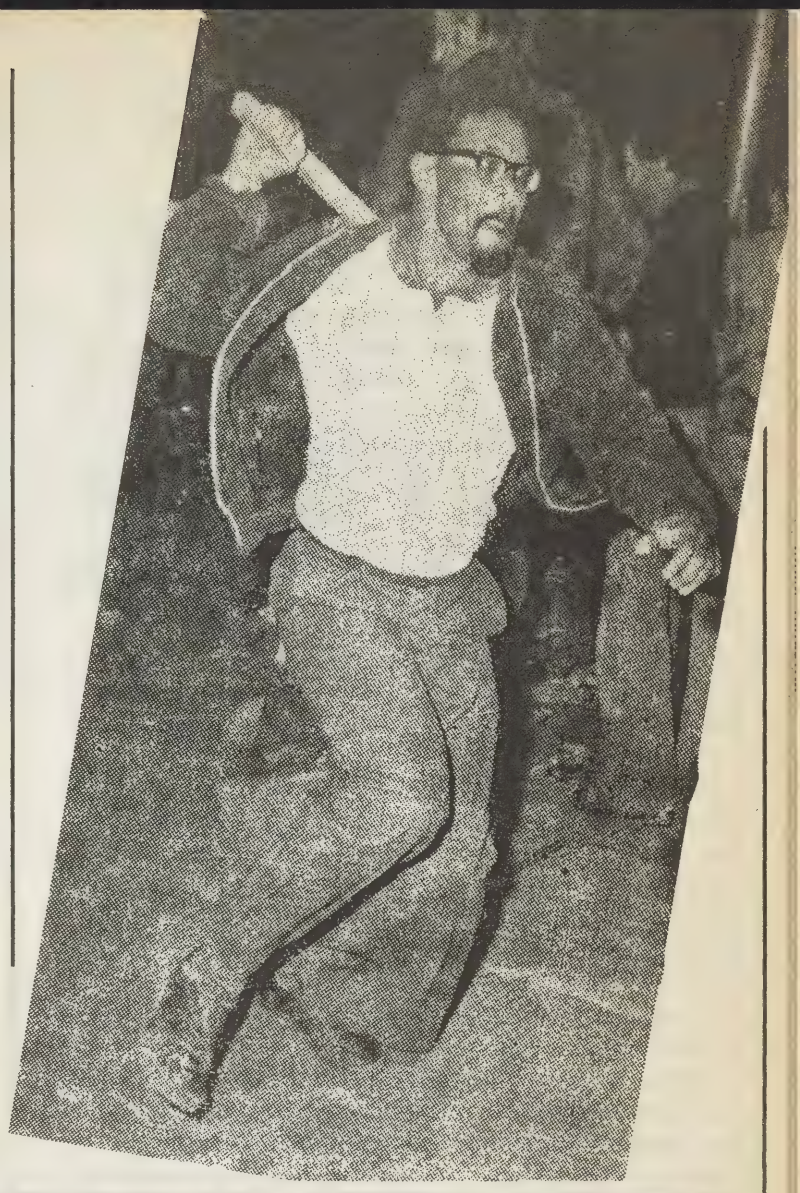
On getting to Ladbroke Grove station we, like most other youths, headed for the traditional meeting area under the fly-over at the corner of Portobello and Acklam Road. It was around six in the afternoon. This area, usually the focal point of Carnival, was bare of stalls or sound systems. Sounds drifted down from further up Acklam Road, the only thing that seemed right and familiar at this Carnival.

As usual, large numbers massed in this area, standing around as though expecting something to happen. There was a constant stream of people into this area from Ladbroke Grove. The atmosphere here was tense, apprehensive and expectant. You felt a spark would ignite the place into violence. The feeling was very strong; you saw it in all the faces of the people there. They dare not relax; they

were permanently on their toes. On many occasions people would suddenly start running which would trigger off a general stampede. There would be no reason for this.

From the time we arrived a line of police had quietly blocked that area by just being there; they made no attempt to stop anyone passing by them. A line of the policemen turned and filed down so that they were across Cambridge Gardens. As soon as the policemen turned, a section of the crowd bolted down Cambridge Gardens and across the Green. After a while mass swipes by the crowd became frequent, especially from the Portobello Road area under the fly-over. Then a constant stream of people came running into the area from the direction of Portobello Road. When the more frequent swipes started, we noticed a group of 10 to 15 youths. They were around 13-19 years old and they appeared to be throwing cans at each other. The crowd grew excited and agitated. Everyone in that area had their eyes on that battle. After about 15 minutes the youths ran down Portobello Road in the direction from which they came.

It was becoming dark now. We left the fly-over area and walked back to Ladbroke Grove tube station. On our way we heard shouting behind us. Six young blacks aged 13 and 14 were grappling with an old white man. The white man was pulling something to his chest while the young blacks furiously pulled him. One guy got fed up and punched the man in his chest or head. He fell immediately. At the sight of this other blacks, aged over 25, told the youths to stop and pulled one youth who persisted off the white man. The group ran off. The older blacks picked up the white man





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who continued to walk down Ladbroke Grove.

From what we saw on the Sunday, we thought there had to be trouble tomorrow, Bank Holiday Monday. There would be more people present. As we left Ladbroke Grove we saw a speeding line of Special Patrol Group vans going towards Ladbroke Grove station. The movement of the police generally that day confirmed our fears. It also emphasised that if trouble occurred it would not be like last year.

On Carnival Monday we arrived in the Ladbroke Grove area around 2 pm. There were many whites along the pavement in Ladbroke Grove. We hadn't seen so many white people before at Carnival. We decided to stay in Ladbroke Grove to await some bands. A Notting Hill Carnival and Arts Committee steward said that bands would be coming down Ladbroke Grove. We waited for two hours but only two small bands went by. We decided to give up the idea of joining a band on Ladbroke Grove and walked back to the traditional meeting place, the fly-over area.

As usual, it was packed with people and still bare of sounds or refreshments. The atmosphere was the same as the day before, but in a higher state of excitement and tension. The police were clearly visible at the top of the junction between Acklam Road, Portobello Road and Cambridge Gardens. There were about four policemen on the fly-over and a file of policemen on the underground bridge over Portobello Road.

When we got to this point it was around 4 pm. The densest area was under the fly-over. As on the day before, there were wild stampedes for no reason. After half an hour we decided to go looking for bands down Portobello Road. There were much more police in this area. We saw a sound system in a side street with a large crowd of youth around. Police officers in a green police coach had the group under surveillance. It suddenly became clear that the police were keeping a low profile in the Acklam Road/Cambridge Gardens area while being intimidating elsewhere. We also saw many more stalls, sounds and general activity in stark contrast to the fly-over area.

We returned to the fly-over area. As we walked towards the underground bridge a policewoman was crouching on the bridge immediately over Portobello Road. A hail of cans flew at her and a cheer came from the crowd when the cans met the target. Immediately behind us, a scream. It was a white woman who was having her handbag stolen. The youths got the bag and dashed through the crowd towards Acklam Road. Suddenly, there was more screaming and everyone started to run.

We positioned ourselves on the edge of the Green at Cambridge Gardens. From there you could see small scuffles and the movement of people away and towards the centre of activities. No one needed to be told it was "sticks" — pick-pocketing. The police on the underground bridge filed out over Portobello Road. A column of about 10-15 policemen came up Portobello Road and stayed under the bridge. This caused everybody to run from the area and a shower of tins rained on the police under the bridge and they retreated. A policeman on the underground bridge waved the police off the bridge under another hail of cans. About five minutes later, another scream. Again people started running. A Special Patrol Group (SPG) transit van, lights blazing, drove into the crowd under the fly-over. Loud bangs as cans were hurled against the van. The van quickly reversed out. There was a loud cheer from the crowd. The atmosphere was electric, one more attack and there would be a full-scale riot. The police disappeared apart from those at Acklam Road junction.

Everybody was relieved. People thought that the danger moment had passed. The "sticks" continued; then, there was a loud choking sound. The sound came from a tall Notting Hill Carnival and Arts Committee (NHCAC) steward hitting two sticks together. He would beat his sticks and dash towards where the "sticks" was going on. The crowd became agitated. For the next hour and a half NHCAC stewards, with the siren of the beating sticks, dashed into groups all over the area under the fly-over. The stewards had long sticks two feet sometimes 3 feet long, with which they would beat groups of people indiscriminately. At first there was support for the stewards from the crowd. No one threw cans at them. After an hour the stewards began to grow bigger in numbers, approximately 7-10 and began beating more viciously and wildly. The crowd sensed this change and support for the stewards soon changed to fear. Now the stick banging was a signal for fear and panic. People started to run again, this time away from the stewards. The police present, like everyone else, had a clear view of all these proceedings and stayed in their positions.

We left this area around six o'clock, with the stewards still beating the sticks together, and the crowd shouting and running. At about half-past seven we heard the screaming increase in volume. We went to Cambridge Gardens. It had become dark. Carnival had turned into another battle. A police coach pulled up on Cambridge Gardens opposite the Green. Policemen dashed out of the coach and immediately met with a hail of bricks and cans from the ground. The police pulled out riot shields from the back of the coach. They formed ranks of 10 behind the shields. There were three such formations of policemen. The sound of stones and cans against plastic shields filled the air.

The formation moved forward immune from the missiles. The throwers retreated. The police lines moved forward and cleared the Green of people. We proceeded to Ladbroke Grove and saw that all the side streets leading to Ladbroke Grove were blocked off by a line of policemen. We managed to get into Ladbroke Grove.

On Ladbroke Grove, up from the underground station, there was a double line of policemen behind plastic shields. Ranged against them, 40 yards away, was a large group of blacks. Most were young. Four to five punk rockers were in the crowd, there were also a few other young whites. For the first minute the two sides watched each other. Then one guy threw a bottle, then another and another. A wave of bottles ranged down on the



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police. There was no reaction. The wall of shields stood unbroken and slowly moved up towards the crowd. The crowd ran up the road emptying dustbins and looking into gardens for other ammunition. Little was available. The crowd was unable to keep up a continuing barrage of stones and bottles as there were so few around. When someone found a bottle at least four people would ask him, "are you going to throw it? If not give it to me".

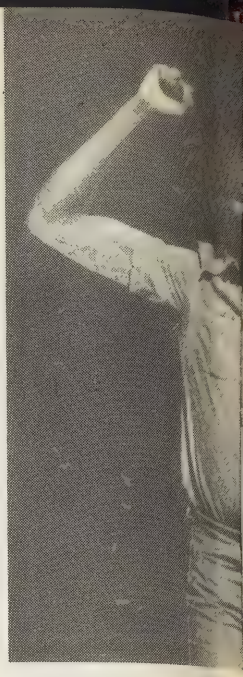
The crowd was contained in Ladbroke Grove as most side streets were cut off by police vans and coaches. A police van tried to come up the road through the crowd but the hail of missiles forced a diversion. Another coach appeared from a side street. The crowd moved to stone it and a shout of "no" went up. It was an ordinary coach taking people home. A third coach emerged from one of the side streets, a police coach, its windows smashed. A green coach sped down Ladbroke Grove. The crowd had their backs turned to the coach but screams and shouts alerted everyone. The coach went through the crowd, it was bombarded and nearly all its windows broken.

The crowd by now, was trapped between two groups of police at each end of Ladbroke Grove. Outside a pub, some shouted "pub! pub! pub!" Bottles were pelted at the pub. The clientele, who came out to view the incidents, ran back inside. The rest of the crowd shouted, "no! no!" The stoning of the pub stopped. A cheer then a roar went up from the crowd and the people spontaneoulsy ran down Ladbroke Grove towards the cordon of plastic shields. They threw their missiles and ran back up Ladbroke Grove. The police at the bottom moved up again and the crowd ran into the side streets and was dispersed.



Roco

BACKLASH



Following the imprisonment of our editor, Darcus Howe, the Action Committee, organised to free him, mobilised international protest responses which were sent to both the Lord Chancellor, head of the judiciary, and the Home Secretary. Below, we print a cross section of these.

WEST INDIES

The struggle of our life member for the staging of London West Indian Carnival 1977 makes judge's verdict unacceptable. You refuse to see him now you jail him. Free him now. We stand firm with *Race Today* and all other organisations in battle for human rights.

Renegades Steelband, East Dry River, Trinidad.

We are of the opinion that the sentence handed out to Darcus Howe was given with malice. We totally object.

We would like you to use your good offices to give justice where it is needed.

United Zones Area Council, Belmont, Harlem, Lavantille, Gonzales, Basilon St. Trinidad.

We object to judge's decision in the jailing of Darcus Howe. We have always supported his views as expressed in *Race Today* especially his recent stand towards the Notting Hill Carnival 1977. His views have enabled us in the Caribbean to be conscious of the brutality that is meted out to our West Indian brothers and sisters in England. In our little Republic, we don't treat your nationals with such malice.

We demand his immediate release.

Harlem Community Organisation, Trinidad.

The involvement of editor of *Race Today*, Darcus Howe, in fight for justice for the black community in Caribbean and U.K., makes judge's verdict unacceptable. We demand immediate release. Will support all action of organisations within the black community in their movement towards his freedom.

A pity your nationals here are not treated in same manner.

Basilon Street Community Centre, Trinidad.

Mr Barry Stanley,
British High Commission,
Trinidad.

Dear Sir,

We, the residents of the East Dry River community, would like you to convey to the British Home Secretary our utter disapproval at the recent jailing of Darcus Howe at the Knightsbridge Crown Court on Wednesday, September 7, 1977.

Is fine and confinement the type of justice our nationals must expect when they defend themselves from physical racist attacks? Just as they attempted to silence his voice at the Mangrove Nine Trial for his stand on police brutality, now, seven years later, they are using the right of black people to defend themselves from racist attacks.

As editor of *Race Today*, he was able to expose the myth that racism was on the decrease in your country, and, as such, enabled us to understand the physical and mental brutality that our West Indian brothers and sisters experience while resident in your country. We stand firm with the views expressed in *Race Today*, in relation to the problems that black people in the U.K. have to deal with, especially their recent stand on the West Indian London Carnival, 1977.

Mr Home Secretary, you would no doubt recall that in his capacity as Chairman of the Carnival Development Committee he requested that you meet with them to discuss the question of the policing of the Carnival. You refused and, as a result, there were clashes with the black youths and the police. This result, Mr Home Secretary, was clearly predicted in *Race Today*. On Monday, August 30, 1977, in a radio broadcast, he defended the position of the black youths at the Carnival. It is clear to us that your government intends to silence, by using any means necessary, the stand taken by any black organisation which dares to demand fundamental human rights for our people.

As with the Mangrove Nine Trial, seven years ago, we, once again, voice our strong protests in the form of a petition which is attached.

Yours respectfully,
Winston Bruce, Albert Mader,
Carol Boodoo, Lenin Woolford,
Stafford Howe.
For East Dry River Defence Committee, Trinidad.

Greetings *Race Today* and congratulations on the success of your editor's appeal.

The East Dry River community is a working class area situated in the east of the capital city, Port of Spain. Its residents are made up of unemployeds, under-employeds, industrial workers, with a small percentage of civil servants, and, last but not least, a high proportion of school children.

WE FREED



BACKLASH

Our history has always been one of rebellion against social, cultural and political injustices. Our first battle was to have the steelbands accepted within the society as the legitimate art form of us unemployeds and, as you all are now experiencing, the battle against banning of the Carnival. Then, during the turbulent days of 1970, we were at the forefront, along with other oppressed sections of the society, in the mass movement for a total change in the politics of our country.

Your editor, Darcus Howe, played a prominent part in every aspect of our rebellion. This is reflected by his present position as a life member of Renegades Steelband and Survival and Harlem Communty Organisations. It is against this background that on Wednesday, September 7, 1977, at 10 am, the news of Darcus's imprisonment broke in the East Dry River community. We have a system called the grapevine' by which important news events are transmitted. Within minutes of receiving the news, the leadership within the various sections of East Dry River (Renegades, Harlem and Survival) got together to decide on a course of action. An East Dry River Defence Committee was formed and listed below are the actions we carried out.

DIARY OF EVENTS

Thursday 8: Telegrams sent to the Home Secretary and Lord Chancellor by Renegades Steelband.

Friday 9: Drafted petitions. More telegrams to Home Secretary by other community organisations. Visit to Leader of Opposition in Trinidad and Tobago Parliament. He is Mr Raffique Shah. We informed him of events and actions. He in turn informed us that he was meeting with British Foreign Office Minister, Mr Ted Rowlands, on Tuesday 13, and would raise the matter with him. We agreed to this course of action.

Saturday 10: Drafted letter of protest to the High Commissioner to forward to the Home Secretary.

Sunday 11: Petitions circulated.

Monday 12: Printing and circulating of second complement of petitions. News breaks in national press with statement by Senator George Weekes, President General of the Oilfield Workers Trade Union voicing strong protest.

Tuesday 13: Telegrams concerning appeal sent to Home Secretary. Letter of protest together with 500 signatures on petitions handed in at the British High Commissioner's office in Port of Spain.

The matter raised with Rowlands by George Weekes who, having just returned from London, was able to put forward the facts of the incident. Shah supported Weekes and also added that Darcus Howe was a personal friend of his.

Both British officials, Rowlands and another, stated that it was a matter for the judiciary and the due process of law. Both Shah and Weekes disagree stating that much more was involved than the due process of law.

Wednesday 14: News of freedom received East Dry River informed and other organisations led by Shah and Weekes. Collection of outstanding petitions with a further 600 making it 1000 in all signatures.

Finally, our similarity of thought and action in this affair makes our hopes, aspirations and ideals one and the same. Such an experience has brought us closer together. Continue the good work so that we can both move forward to a higher region.

One Love,
Winston Bruce, Albert Mader,
Carol Boodoo, Lenin Woolford,
Stafford Howe.
For East Dry River Defence Committee,
Trinidad.

Three months prison sentence and fine on Darcus Howe, editor of *Race Today* and chairman of Carnival Development Committee, at Knightsbridge on 7.9.77 is outrageous.

Howe has no previous convictions. Astonished that no bail was granted pending appeal. Sentence and conviction must be reconsidered.

This type of action imperils British interests in the Caribbean.

Senator George Weekes, President General, Oilfield Workers Trade Union, Trinidad.

ACLM and people of Antigua deeply disturbed at racist attack on Darcus Howe. Free Darcus.

Afro Caribbean Liberation Movement, Antigua.

Greetings and solidarity dear comrades. We only today received a telegram stating "Darcus Howe imprisoned . . . " and we

DARCUS

replied by telegram to the Home Secretary.
"Arrest of Darcus Howe, black leader, a disgrace to British justice. Compensation necessary." ARWEE

Over the weekend, except in the event of information advising otherwise, we shall have fraternal organisations forwarding their own protest.

We remember Darcus' visit here and have followed the rise of the work of *Race Today* in which he shares. We know that the shades of fascism would seek to haunt him, but the black community in Britain, the working class movement in Britain, the justice seeking organisations in Britain and the transnational forces of struggle must be firm, solid and steel-edged in the defence of Darcus, fighter, comrade and friend.

Keep us informed.

One cause,
Oscar Allan, ARWEE, Diamond,
St Vincent.

NORTH AMERICA

We speak for the Toronto black working class in demanding the immediate release of Darcus Howe presently held as a political prisoner in your country.
The Black Education Project,
Toronto, Canada.

The recent politically motivated sentence against Mr Darcus Howe has come as a great shock. I hope that the British sense of justice has not been completely abandoned to such racist practice by the British courts.
Steve Lough, Canada.

Mr Darcus Howe, editor of *Race Today*, has been unjustly sentenced and persecuted in the British courts. I strongly protest such an attack and demand the racist conviction be completely and totally reversed.
Gordon Lebefrve,
Centre de Formation Populaire,
Canada.

I must strongly protest the recent conviction of a leading member of the black community, Mr Darcus Howe. By condemning this man, the British government is demonstrating a complete indifference to fairness while supporting a policy of racial and political repression against the entire immigrant community.
Tran Tuandung, Canada.

I condemn the recent sentencing of Mr Darcus Howe. In Canada we are becoming more and more aware of the racial and political repression taking place in England. This case confirms our worst fears about the collapse of British justice.
Cindy Homzy, Canada.

We, after living in England, feel ashamed to learn that the British courts have been used to repress and unjustly attack an important leader in the black community, Mr Darcus Howe. We protest strongly against such blatant injustice.
Alan and Alliette Jenkins, Canada.

As Americans, we are aware of the effects of racial and political repression. We know that the recent conviction of Mr Darcus Howe reflects a growing attack by the British government against the aspirations of blacks in England. We cannot protest strongly enough such injustices.
Audrey Schirmer, Canada.

I strongly condemn the recent court sentence against Mr Darcus Howe, editor of *Race Today*. This action certainly implies a racialist and politically motivated attack against an important leader among immigrants in England.
Tuan Nguyen-Duc, Canada.

I wish to vigorously protest the injustice and penalties against Mr Darcus Howe, editor of *Race Today* by your government. Does this type of repression represent your government's policy toward leaders of the immigrant community in England?
Jim Brophy, Canada.

I wish to register the strongest protest against your government's attack against Mr Darcus Howe. I intend to follow closely to see if your government will correct this racist provocation against a working class leader.
Jody Freeman, Canada.

On behalf of Rank and File I wish to strongly condemn the recent jailing of Darcus Howe. This kind of harassment against a black immigrant leader will not go unnoticed by us here in Quebec.
Gail Young,
Rank and File, Canada.

Sir, I am writing to request re urgent dismissal of all charges against Darcus Howe. Imperative judicial procedures remain impartial and not become pawns of the moment's ruling party.
John Lippert,
Avery, Detroit.

We are appalled by the injustice perpetrated against Darcus Howe. The imprisonment of the *Race Today* editor for defending himself against verbal and physical attacks is a horrendous violation of human rights and political victimization. We call for the immediate release of Darcus Howe.
Caribbean Dialogue Collective,
Toronto, Canada.

Recent sentence of Darcus Howe, *Race Today* editor and Carnival Development Committee chairman, appears punishment for political activism. Urge bail be granted and sentence reconsidered on appeal.
Trigger Unemployed Youth Centre,
Toronto, Canada.

The unprecedented sentencing of Darcus Howe is racially motivated. We demand his sentence be reconsidered and dismissed.
Toronto Clarion, 96 Gerrard St.
Toronto, Ont., Canada.

Protest sentence of Darcus Howe urge reconsider on appeal.
Peter Dorsman, President,
Canadian Union of Industrial Employees,
Canada.

We are alarmed at news of the conviction and harsh sentencing of Darcus Howe, editor of *Race Today* and civil rights leader. We urge that his sentence be reconsidered on appeal.
GATT-FLY
a project of Canadian churches for global justice.

We members of the black community in Canada, along with many concerned organisations and individuals, black and white, wish to register a strong protest regarding the recent conviction and three-month prison sentence handed down by a British court to Darcus Howe. Darcus Howe, a West Indian immigrant in Britain, is editor of the monthly magazine *Race Today*, which is published by the Race Today Collective, one of the leading organisations active in the West Indian and Asian immigrant communities.

We strongly urge the appropriate authorities in Britain to base their review of Darcus Howe's sentence scheduled for September 14, on the facts outlined in this statement. We believe that these facts do not even warrant a conviction, let alone any prison sentence.

The facts speak for themselves.

The charge of which Darcus Howe was recently convicted arose from an incident in May, 1976. He was harassed, grabbed and subjected to racial abuse by a white ticket collector on the London subway. When he told the ticket collector to lay off, he was in turn attacked by a white lawyer, who struck him with an umbrella. After ably defending himself against this physical attack, he was charged with assault causing bodily harm to the lawyer. His two white assailants were not charged.

The incident occurred at a time when racist assaults against Asian immigrants in London were dramatically on the increase, incited by M.P. Enoch Powell's campaign to expel all black immigrants from Britain. *Race Today* has been active since spring 1976 in assisting Asians in providing for their own security in London's streets and communities.

Speaking in his own defense at his trial on September 7, 1977, Darcus Howe outlined to the all-white jury the racially tense context in which the subway



Julian Stapleton



Julian Stapleton

incident occurred and how his response to being physically assaulted was part of a broad movement in the black community to defend themselves in the absence of adequate police protection. The presiding judge, casting aside any pretence at impartiality, warned the jury against persons who try to "use racism" to their own advantage, implying clearly that there was no evidence of racism in the case. After the jury returned a guilty verdict, the judge, objecting to what he perceived to be the defendant's unrepentant "arrogance", sentenced him to three months in prison and a £100 fine.

Legal sources in Britain state that any prison sentence on such a relatively minor charge for a person never previously convicted is rare, and that the three month sentence is of unprecedented severity.

We find it impossible to dissociate Darcus Howe's conviction and sentence from the recent escalation of the white racists' campaign to expel all black immigrants from Britain. This campaign has seen increased physical intimidation of blacks in the streets, and stepped up efforts by the black community to provide for its own physical safety.

The racists' campaign was the background of the disturbances at the West Indian Carnival in London in late August, scarcely nine days before Darcus Howe's trial. As chairman of the Carnival Development Committee, the organisation responsible for Carnival, Darcus Howe has figured prominently in the controversy surrounding Carnival, the largest social and political event in the West Indian community in Britain.

Darcus Howe's imprisonment at this time is welcomed by the white racists and all those who promote the division of blacks and whites. For the black community and all working people in Britain, his imprisonment is a serious setback.

The circumstances surrounding the arrest, trial and conviction of Darcus Howe lead us to conclude that even in the face of its failure to protect the black community from racist assaults, the British government is throwing the full weight of the police and courts against the leaders of those who choose to defend themselves.

In making this protest we are fully aware that the authorities in Canada appear to be following in the British government's footsteps in their failure to protect black and Asian immigrants here from racist attacks. Already sections of these immigrant communities have had to take steps to provide for their own safety. In supporting the right of Darcus Howe and all black immigrants in Britain to defend themselves against racist attacks, we are asserting the same right for black and Asian immigrants in Canada whenever the authorities fail to ensure adequate protection.

We join with other organisations and individuals in Britain, Europe, the Caribbean, India, the United States and Canada in calling for the immediate release of Darcus Howe and the withdrawal of the prison sentence.

Caribbean Dialogue,
New Beginning Movement,
Toronto, Canada.

BRITAIN

Three months prison sentence and fine on Darcus Howe, editor of *Race Today* and Chairman of Carnival Development Committee at Knightsbridge on 7.9.77 is outrageous.

Howe has no previous convictions. Astonished that no bail was granted pending appeal. Sentence and conviction must be reconsidered.

Black Parents Movement,
London.

Joint Council for Welfare of Immigrants gravely concerned at conviction and sentence of Darcus Howe, editor of *Race Today*. Sentence patently excessive and selective bringing of charges and victimisation of prominent black activist strongly suspected.

Ian Martin,
General Secretary,
JCWI, London.

On behalf of the Carnival Development Committee I wish to lodge a strong protest at the severe sentence passed on Mr Darcus Howe at the Knightsbridge Crown Court yesterday on a charge which, as a first offender, should have been negligible. I feel that a substantial amount of racial prejudice was involved and shall be much obliged if you will do all in your power to effect his immediate release on bail pending the granting of his appeal.

Selwyn Baptiste,
Carnival Development Committee.

We, Sabarr Collective, strongly protest at the conviction and outrageous sentence meted out to Darcus Howe, *Race Today*, for an act of self defence. This act further aligns the courts with those who actively seek to deprive us of the means of justice.

Sabarr Books,

On Thursday, September 15 at noon we sent the Home Secretary the following telegram:

Protest sentence on Darcus Howe. Three months first offence deplorable. Clear victimization. Demand immediate release.

We look forward to hearing how things are going and hope you will contact us if there is anything else we can do to help further Darcus' release. Until then, please give him our 'best wishes' and expressions of solidarity against this blatant victimization.

Lindsey Whetham,
for Bradford Ad-Hoc Committee against Facism.

We deplore the racist sentence passed on the editor of *Race Today*. He has been victimised for his consistent challenge to the state on its treatment of black people.

Teachers' Action Collective.

Protest three months imprisonment of Darcus Howe, editor *Race Today*

He has no previous convictions and is being punished for his colour and politics.

The Leveller Magazine.

We have been greatly disturbed to hear the news of the astonishingly harsh sentence which has been passed on Darcus Howe. The incident in question seems to have been very trivial, and, whatever the merits of the argument about who started it, it is an extraordinary thing that anyone should think of countering it by imprisonment. That someone with no previous convictions should be so treated makes matters worse. The harshness of this sentence is bound to make the public

ask if the judge would have treated a white defendant in the same way.

J.S. Daniels
Russell Press.

We have been shocked and outraged at the sentence of three months and fine meted out to Darcus Howe, editor of *Race Today* at Knightsbridge Crown Court on September 7.

The incident and later intervention of the police and subsequent conviction highlights once more justification of the fears held by community at the hands of the upholders of the law. We demand you take immediate action and restore full personal freedom to Darcus Howe.

Jessica Huntley
for Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications Ltd.,
Ealing.

We strongly protest at the severe sentence given yesterday at Knightsbridge Crown Court to Darcus Howe, editor of *Race Today.*

Alison & Busby, Publishers.

The verdict is unacceptable. Forward.

VI Leeds.

We protest the disproportionately harsh sentence passed on Darcus Howe, a man without previous convictions, for a relatively minor incident. We are not satisfied that the judge's remarks and reasons for the sentence were not racially biased.

Institute of Race Relations.

Dear Darcus,

May we offer our congratulations to you on being set free by the Appeal Court on Wednesday, September 14 1977. These were the unanimous sentiments expressed by the Hackney Community Relations Council's Executive Committee members at its meeting on September 15. 1977.

There were expressions of praise for the organisers for the very well planned and executed campaign on your behalf. May the ordeal of mental and physical anguish suffered by you inspire you to even greater heights, in your struggle on behalf of the black community in Britain.

Patrick Kodikara, Chairman
Hackney Community Relations Council.

As black women we are angry and bitter at the continual harassment and abuse heaped on us daily. As women we have to deal with every attack on black people, whether directly on us or on black people especially black men.

We are all mothers or potential mothers and when our men are imprisoned by the police and judges, the financial cost and emotional pain caused by these chains are felt by all at home and abroad. The imprisonment of Darcus Howe is one example of how hundreds of black people worldwide are convicted for defending themselves.

We are no longer going to allow these violations to continue without taking action.

Leggo Darcus Howe.

Norma Steele
Black Women In The Wages For Housework Campaign.

Dear Darcus

We were appalled to hear of the savage sentence passed on you on September 7 and pleased that you are now free. We stand with those who have been concerned with certain worrying aspects of your case which we see as part of the overall fight facing black people in this society. One of us was at Carnival this year and together we rejoice that events went so well and wish you all 'power to your elbow' for 1978.

With best wishes
Bow Mission
for David Moore, Paul Charman &
Tony Holden.

Dear Mr. John,

I am most concerned to learn of the prison sentence imposed on Mr Darcus Howe, following his conviction for actual bodily harm in the Knightsbridge Crown Court on 7 September. As Chairman of the British Council of Churches' Community and Race Relations Unit's field worker committee, I know that this concern is shared by my colleagues; we have come to have this highest regard for his integrity as an individual, as well as in his official position in the Race Today Collective.

I have known Darcus Howe for nearly four years; our initial contact was through my official capacity as secretary of a grant making trust, but we would now count each other as personal friends. Although I am not in a position to comment on the events which led to the charge or conviction, I do feel most strongly that the sentence is wholly inappropriate for a person of Darcus Howe's record.

Insofar as there could be public repercussions from the rejection of his appeal against sentence, I would assume that you and the court will take these into account. What the incident has done, of course, is to throw into sharp focus those factors which are producing a diminution of faith in the administration of justice through our courts. Darcus is not a man to ask for special treatment because he happens to have friends able to write and speak on his behalf; he would agree that special pleading were justified if it were to result in a general review of the chain of events which have produced this particular sentence. These events should not, I submit, be regarded as isolated incidents, but as symptomatic of tensions which affect behaviour in public places and courtroom alike.

As an indication of my feeling on this matter, I plan to participate in any peaceful demonstration which I am able to attend.

Anthony E. Wilson.

I am appalled to hear of the sentence passed today on my friend and colleague Darcus Howe. On the facts as I have heard them it appears that Darcus should have been the plaintiff, not the defendant, and it is a grim indication of the degree of racism in Britain that a man can be convicted of a criminal offence for reacting as he did to racial abuse.

Darcus's conviction is doubly tragic in the light of the key place he occupies within the black community, as his work to make last month's Notting Hill Carnival a success illustrates.

From my knowledge of him over the last seven years I find it impossible to believe that Darcus is guilty of this crime and I hope that, both for his own sake and for the sake of justice, he will be released immediately and his conviction quashed.

(The Revd.) Alexander Kirby
Research Secretary, WCC Programme to Combat Racism.

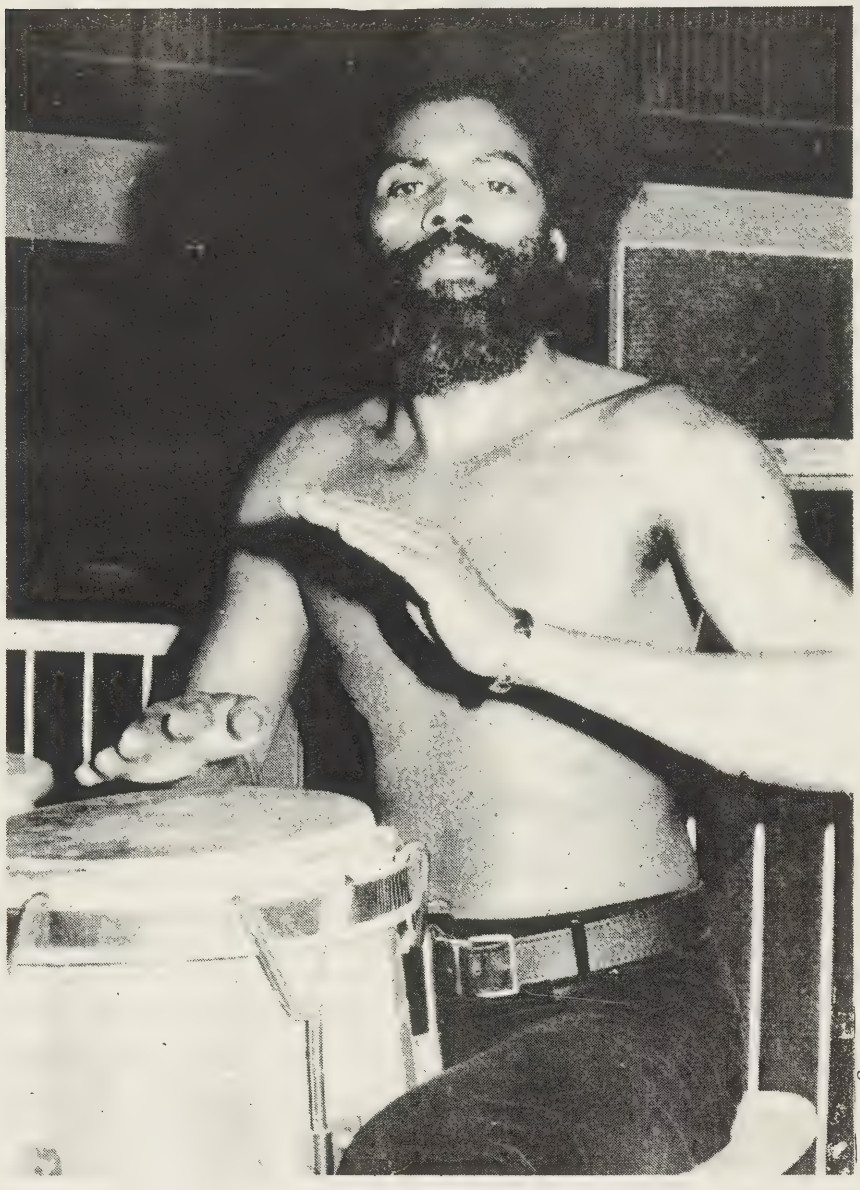
Dear Mr John,

It is with profound dismay and a sense of shock that I heard today of the severity of the sentence passed on Mr Darcus Howe, the Editor of *Race Today* at the Crown Court at Knightsbridge on 7 September. As a witness to the good character of Mr Howe, I was present at the Law Courts this morning when his application for bail was refused and we were told that an application for an appeal could be made in open court next Wednesday.

I would urge you to intervene in this case to ensure that the sentence is mitigated and that full notice is taken of the fact that Mr Howe was reacting to racist provocation. This was his first conviction and the injury he is accused of causing was no more than a black eye. Three months in jail for such an offence is surely an excessive penalty which can only exacerbate the feeling that it is difficult for a black man, acting in defence of his dignity, to secure justice in a British court. Believing that you will not wish this kind of conclusion to be drawn, I beg you to do what you can to hasten Mr Howe's release, so that he can continue to serve the black community in this country through his editorial work on the magazine *Race Today,* which we all recognise as a most important contribution to the whole race relations debate.

Pauline M. Webb,
Chairman: British Council of Churches
Race Relations Unit.

INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTOR OF THE CARNIVAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE



Kensington Post

Forty year old Trinidadian, Selwyn Baptiste, has been and still is a leading figure in the Carnival movement here in Britain.

In 1976, he was elected Chairman of the Carnival Development Committee and in 1977 he became its Director.

Like thousands of us, he carried the Carnival experience in his bones from a small West Indian village in South Trinidad to the streets of Notting Hill Gate.

Unlike thousands of us he has, throughout his life, been practically involved in the growth of the steelband movement both at home and here in Britain.

In an interview with *Race Today*, Selwyn describes the social and cultural climate which shaped his commitment to the development of the steelband, the central force within Carnival.

Selwyn, could you sketch the atmosphere and circumstances of your early life in Trinidad?

I was born in La Romain which was formerly known as La Plaisance. It is a small village about four miles out of San Fernando, the industrial capital of Trinidad. La Romain is surrounded by the sugar industry, the oil industry and the asphalt industry.

There were three of us children; I am the last. I lived with my mother, my grandfather and grandmother, brothers and sisters. The whole family situation was all interwoven because uncles and aunts and lots of my relatives lived nearby. My father was not around.

What did your mother do?

My mother was a seamstress. She was very hardworking, particularly interested in education for her children. In her early years she taught at a school,

but for various reasons she became a very good seamstress. She had to work very hard to keep us and send us to school. My father worked in the oil industry. He was quite a musician and had a great interest in cultural activities. My Grandfather was a cane farmer. As a matter of fact we lived close to the land. We planted crops and reared animals – goats, cattle etc. He was, as I remember it, a natural leader of the community. He was regarded as a bush lawyer. He was a man of African stock and had a sound basic education. In those days you found that Negroes were more educated than the Indians, who were brought to Trinidad as indentured labour. My grandfather looked after the affairs of Indian landowners and did all their book work and advised them on how to conduct their business transactions. I remember as a kid I used to see Mr. Lucky coming to visit my grandfather. Lucky is now one of the richest men in the island. He would pay my grandfather a great amount of respect. I asked him why all the respect and he described his relation to the Indians and how he assisted them. Eventually my grandfather broke with the landlords. He disagreed with the way in which they conducted their land affairs, and, on several occasions they took him to court. On every occasion he defended himself and won. Eventually, he became heavily involved in the land tenants movement, advising people of their rights in relation to the laws governing the land situation in La Romain. Again he was a man who promoted a range of cultural activities like Shango, Bele, and rituals relating to the island's folklore. He participated fully and led the situation because he knew all the songs and was a fantastic singer.

He was a christian, in the first place brought up as an Anglican. He became totally fed up with the way in which the Anglican church operated in Trinidad. He opted out of the situation and formed his own church, a Baptist church; so that he participated both in the religious, cultural and political life of the community in La Romain. But it spread further than that because he had contacts all over the island, and travelled throughout pursuing his religious and cultural activities.

These were some of the major circumstances and the atmosphere of my early life around the home, both my mother and grandfather being the major influences.

Tell us about your education?

I went to a private school run by my late uncle. He was the headmaster of the private school and he organised the school at his home. He was a tower of strength. He also ran adult classes teaching adults to read and write. I experienced him for about three or four years when he died. From there I went to the Ben Venue Canadian Mission School which was nearby. I stayed there for a little while and then went to San Fernando Methodist School. I became a monitor, preparing to go to Teacher Training College. I lost interest and went to a commercial college and San Fernando Technical College. There I did commercial studies to the intermediate level, shorthand, typing and book keeping. I also went to extra mural classes sponsored by the University of the West Indies.

After my schooling my grandfather, through his trade union contacts, got me a job as a stenographer in the All Trinidad Sugar Estates and Factory Workers Trade Union. I became chairman of a trade union branch, but my work in the office was mainly administrative. I had to attend conferences at the Labour Mission in Port of Spain when we were negotiating with the sugar manufacturers. I remember once, when there was a breakdown in the negotiations between the sugar manufacturers and our union representatives. The matter was referred to the Minister of Labour who was then Albert Gomes. We did not get very far and we struck. There was a a great amount of tension in the sugar belt, and it reached a point where a Commission of Enquiry was about to be set up. I remember having to take a letter to the Governor of Trinidad and Tobago. The whole sugar industry, both the factory workers and the agricultural workers, were on strike and that went on for a long time. There was an intervention from the Trades Union Congress in Britain. Then, a man by the name of Martin Pound was sent to investigate the industrial unrest and we were assisted in a very small way, I believe, by the Trades Union Congress in Britain. Eventually that matter, if I rightly remember, was resolved; an agreement was found and people went back to work.

You became one of the leading tenor pan soloists among steelbandsmen in Trinidad. Could you describe how you became a steelbands musician and what were the influences on you?

All the influences came from the La Romain community. I remember as a kid I used to attend all the religious ceremonies like Shango and Bele which were held regularly in the area. I also remember attending lots of wakes where Tamboo Bamboo was used in the great folk activity called Bongo. Tamboo Bamboo was the forerunner to the steelband. All my relatives were actively involved in these practices. I was influenced by observing and participating in this wide range of cultural activity within our community.

When did you get involved in the steelband?

Early really. I would say in terms of dating the situation I cannot remember the year, but I remember as a a kid I used to play a semi-tone kettle.

Could you describe what this is?

A semi-tone kettle is a single pan about the depth of one third of the oil drum. We were very limited in performing on the instrument, but strumming was what we did most of the time on it. From there I developed an interest in the other instruments in the steelband, particularly the ping pong or tenor pan as it is now called. This was the early period in the technical development of steelband music.

In those early days, the steelband was associated to a great extent with political campaigns and would be used in motorcades all over the countryside campaigning for candidates. My brother was a much more advanced steelband musician.

We went through this experience for quite a bit, but because of my mother's interest in our education and because of the struggles that went on between steelbandsmen and the authorities, my

mother called a halt to our involvement.

For example, I remember once there was a European doctor who wrote a long article about the steelband saying that if anyone stood in a steelband for about 15 minutes or half-an-hour, he would be partially deaf after the experience. The church also, to a great extent, saw it as a sort of devilish thing which would encourage violence. The newspapers would publish articles against the steelband movement. This had a heavy influence on the minds of some of our parents. I was a cub at that time in a scout troop, and the scout master also carried on a campaign against the steelband, inviting all its members not to be involved. So pressure was brought to bear and, in my home circle, we were encouraged not to waste too much time playing the steelband, and told to pay more attention to our books. My brother was a much more robust boy than I was and very bold. He, I remember, sneaked out and struck up a relationship with the Free French steelband in San Fernando, which is now sponsored by the Oilfield Workers Trade Union. The Free French was led by Zola, the Baron as he was called, a nice boy, he had a good hand. My brother would go up there from school and practice with them. I obeyed my mother and gave it up for a little while, but I would go off and play percussive instruments like Bele drum and tassa, particularly when I was on holiday, but I cooled the steelband for a while.

So when did you resume your activities?

I resumed my activities when I was around 14/15. I played steelband music mainly with Benjamin Joseph, better known as 'Black Market'. He was one of the greatest steelbands men that passed through Trinidad and Tobago. It was Benji and Theo Stevens — 'Black Market' and 'Black James'. Benji had quite a number of great steelband players in his band at the time, men like Joe Naked, Blood, Joe Young. I was the youngest chap around and they always paid particular attention to me.

I started playing Shac Shac and iron with them, and they would take me around on excursions and so on. From there they moved me straight into the front line, and I started playing the ping pong. We continued for a number of years during which time I participated in steelband competitions given by my father. He was a great enthusiast of the steelband and tuned iron for the iron section because he was a turner in the oil fields and could put out these things. My father also played the trumpet. I emerged from under Benji's wings and moved to open my own band. I was able to take my band under our house.

Had your mother relented by then?

Yes, and in order to appease her we would sometimes play a few hymns and then break away into calypso and that sort of thing. So I started developing my technique and my ability in the steelband fully around that period. I was still at school. The competition was very fierce and, in order to understand a bit more about music, I took private piano lessons from a Mrs Baker, one of the leading tutors in San Fernando.

Was that to improve your steelband music?

That is right, so I developed along those lines. In



1958/59 the preliminaries of the national music festival were being conducted all over the island for the steelband finals. I had my band at the time in the preliminaries. The band failed but I succeeded as a ping pong soloist. The Sundowners steelband did not succeed with their soloist and, as a result, they asked me to come and arrange for their band. So I found myself with Sundowners, arranging the music and participating as a soloist and a steelbandsman. We arrived at Queen's Hall in 1959 with about six other bands in the finals. I will never forget that experience. It was the first time Queen's Hall was opened, that is the national concert hall. Sundowners ran third and I came second as a soloist. An unusual thing happened on that night, a most unfortunate incident. On the night we had to break the ice. The great bands like Invaders, Dixieland and other big bands from Port of Spain were present. The tension was sharp. We got a great reception from the audience, and then came the moment for me to do my solo. As I was about to get into my solo the bass man said he forgot the chords. This was my test piece but my choice tune went down like a bomb. I remember at the end of that great night one of the adjudicators, Dr Northcote, wept and said that he could not believe that steelbands men could perform music with such brilliance. He made a special comment on the Invaders steelband for their interpretation of 'In a Monastry Garden'. He said he never heard it better and he had very nice things to say about my performance and observed what had happened with the bass section.

How was your band financed? Where did you get the money to purchase the drums?

Well getting pans was a problem. Most times we would ask around for them or we put up money here and there. Money was very difficult to get, very, very difficult indeed. Lots of the guys were very hard up and unemployed. You would 'borrow' a neighbour's drum or call in a petrol station and get them on the cheap. I remember one occasion when we needed a lot of pans. We could not get them in a normal way. On New Year's Eve I got together with some of the boys and we decided to collect some pans from the site where a new road was being built in the area. We

selected New Year's Eve to collect these pans and we went down to a baptist camp where one of our friends was on the mourning ground. We passed the night in his baptist camp and, as the new year approached, we decided to make our move. So five of us made a move to collect these drums and on arrival all these drums were full with oil. We couldn't turn back. It was a heavy muddy track to beat and we had to do the inevitable, drain out all the oil. That was a very frightening experience but we succeeded in getting oil drums and we were able to kick off with our band in the way we would like to have it.

You left Trinidad in 1960 to come to England. What did you have in mind?

I came to England to qualify as a musician.

At what point did you begin playing steelband music in Britain?

As soon as I arrived. I came up here with pans, my ping pong, which I used in the music festival, and a pair of double guitars. As soon as I arrived I was put in contact with a man named Alan Bush, a professor of music in this country. He was quite impressed and promptly introduced me to the Workers Music Association. I went to Wortley Village which is a stately home a few miles from Sheffield, carrying out summer projects and summer schools.

Later on, I became dissatisfied because I saw lots of steelbands men playing in groups of threes and fours. I thought well, I cannot continue playing my music this way, because I had been accustomed to playing in big bands. I remember being in contact with the Rio coffee bar shortly after I arrived, with a number of pan men, Eman Thorpe, Boots, McCollin, and myself. We had to do a gig at the Savoy, and we all got down in the basement and practised to get ourselves together in order to do this gig. I felt happy because I saw a number of excellent pan men coming together as a band to do something, but that didn't materialise. It didn't last long, so I opened my own band. I found that more chaps from Grenada were interested in having a band and they rallied around me.

We performed regularly at Bishop Creighton House, bringing about a social awareness among West Indians. I was green and those of us who made an attempt to have a proper steelband here were discouraged. Musicians, who were around, would say it was impossible, you can't make it, so they would pull off guys into small gigs, playing songs like 'Whole day Whole night Miss Mary Ann' and 'Rum and Coca Cola'.

Then I became involved with the West Indian Student Centre in a folk and drama group. I played a prominent role because I had the folk thing at my fingertips. My experiences with the cultural activities organised by my grandfather in La Romain served me well in this enterprise. We went off to Ireland in 1962, the folk and drama group, to participate in the National Union of Students' festival. It was a successful exercise.

At what point did you return to your steelband activities?

I got word from a friend in Paris inviting me over. He was doing well and had contacts with Edith Piaf and people at the top of the entertainment world. He advised me to remain in Paris as an artist playing pan music since I would be better off than I was in England, financially and socially. We stayed in France then went on to Switzerland and various European countries.

We had an excellent cabaret act. We would go on stage as a cabaret for half-an-hour and that was that.

Now, in '65, I was in Lausanne and got a letter asking me to go to St. Tropez. I went down there with the boys. We went all over the place everywhere. That was a gig side also. I had had enough of it because, without criticising my brothers, both socially and politically, I don't think they had been thinking in the way I had. On my return it seemed as though black people, West Indians in particular, weren't going in any direction. They appeared demoralised. I met an Inner London Education Authority Inspector through a contact and took up an offer to start working at the Notting Hill Adventure Playground. I was employed to start a steelband. It was in 1965. I was given three months to do it. I was told by the leader of the playground that after three months activities would not continue He advised that there was no form of continuity with the activities in the playground. He sympathised with me but he was not keen. I said to myself, wherever there is a will there must be a way; I was determined that the steelband must succeed.

What difficulties have you had with training black youngsters in England to play steelband music?

Well the difficulty at first stemmed from not having proper facilities to conduct this activity. We started playing in a big crate, a crazy crate and we had to go inside this crate and we used candles, the platform being mud. We worked in that situation and while we were working there we built a sort of chalet which still exists. We built it with the assistance of students from the Imperial College of Science.

These kids had no experience of the steelband and so I had to work out a method of teaching them. They were extremely enthusiastic boys and girls. Black children in the main, were attracted. I had problems in having the kids relate to the shape of the instrument. I observed that some people were in a hell of a fix for example when holding the sticks. I had to teach them how to operate on the instrument with the greatest amount of economy and time in order to move around. It was very confusing for some to grasp the whole thing at once. So I took them through exercises, stick exercises off the pans in order to loosen them up. Then we moved on to the pans and I observed some had the ability to pick up on a melody quicker than others. I moved them around for a few months until I decided exactly where Tom, Dick or Harry were going to fit into the situation. We arrived at that and from that point we did not turn back. We stuck together.

We had difficulty from a social and sometimes from a racist point of view. The black youngsters who played pan would come in the playground and play and go out and not go into the senior club which was conducted in the evening. It was exclusively white in a downtrodden area. But as we

continued and developed our skills they demanded more respect of whites and the whites would come around and enjoy the music. Like on a Saturday at the playground it was like Carnival. They would all come and dance and jump up and so on. So the boys started winning the respect of the girls, in particular the white girls in the playground, and through this one of the youngsters was made a member of the management committee of the youth club.

The headmaster in the school which was obliquely opposite the playground observed that these kids, who were involved in the steelband, approached their academic studies with a greater amount of confidence. I saw them grow confident because they knew they could do something which placed them at an advantage.

The Notting Hill Carnival began in 1965. Could you explain the development of your steelband in Carnival and your own activities within Carnival?

Our band prepared for Carnival and we had it as a project on the playground. We generated an interest among all the youngsters in the playground to make their own costumes. We selected a team and got them working towards it. They would assist me in sinking pans. I had to tune my own pans. We would paint the pans and construct our own floats.

What was the first year you came on the street for Carnival?

The first year with the band was 1966, that is the year after Carnival started.

At what point did you become organisationally involved?

In 1966 I ran the music section. There weren't many costumes around at the time, it was mainly the steelbands, so Carnival was dependent on our steelband to represent Ladbroke Grove. Russell Henderson, Sterling Betancourt, Vernon Fellows and a number of other guys from the Colherne pub in Earls Court would come and play. There were mainly two groups, two main groups operating in Carnival in those days and we were all steelbands, the Notting Hill Adventure Playground Steelband and Russell Henderson and his group. I co-ordinated the Carnival situation while Mrs Lazlett from the Shanty Town project would make contact with some of the building contractors, like Foster Wheeler, to get wood or trucks for the purpose of taking the kids around.

How would you describe the development of the Carnival movement over the years?

The Carnival movement had been experiencing lots of difficulties from individuals in the community. They saw this thing developing to a great extent and wanted to change the character of it. I wouldn't move or budge an inch. For example, they wanted to give the Carnival a different name. At this point I don't think I would like to call names. They were also trying to involve the host community in a dominant way by bringing in bagpipes and all different things which would water down the West Indian character. So we held fast and at that time we decided to move a stage further by operating as near as we could to what was taking place in Trinidad, by putting pans on wheels. We countered the opposition by getting more bands to come in so that the character of the Carnival would be kept intact.

You became Chairman of the CDC in 1976. How were you elected?

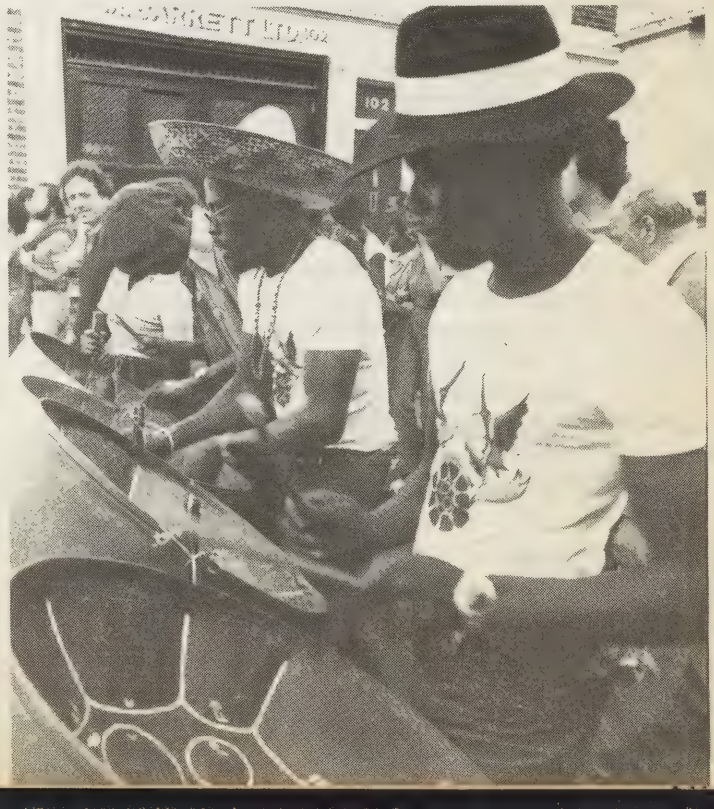
Well I was invited to a meeting in Harrow Road. A number of people were there from the 1975 committee, together with some newcomers. We had a great discussion on the function and the operation of Carnival. Mind you, I was asked since 1974 to come back into the Carnival experience. I had withdrawn for a few years because I thought it was not represented in the way in which we knew it. By 1975 there was a lot of confusion within the committee.

The council had started taking an interest in the Carnival and trying to direct its development. The police came out openly against the Carnival after the protests of certain interest groups in the area. Faced with this sort of problem we got together, had an election and I was made the Chairman. A meeting was reconvened at the Notting Hill Adventure Playground and we dissolved that committee and opened up the whole thing again. Others were elected. There was a problem because it was very very difficult to allocate positions to people in the way it was done, let us say, from a parliamentary point of view. I thought of De Gaulle. De Gaulle appoints his men so I decided, with the agreement of the meeting, to appoint people into positions. That is how the 1976 committee was organised.

Did you meet regularly? Give me some idea about the life of that committee?

That committee was a most complex one. This was so because people, lots of people in the committee had their own personal interests. They wanted to make the maximum political and financial capital out of the Carnival. Together with what was going on within, we were faced with a problem without. Lots of people were not seeing the problem within but the problem within was very acute because of the different interests which existed within the organisation.

The authorities took a lot of liberties with us. One



Julian Stapleton

of the main problems we faced was the attempts to get Carnival off the streets. We exchanged information with the local government and they were insisting that Carnival ought not to be held on the streets. They suggested that we ought to have it in an enclosed area. That was rejected out of hand. So the Home Secretary was written to and the committee became a bit more shaky because those who had an interest in the Carnival saw their interests being eroded. They began making a grab for everything, willing to strip the Carnival of all assets.

What were those interest groups you talk about? Were they steelbands men, mas men and soundmen?

No they weren't. They were, I would say, budding impressarios. They wanted to use the Carnival situation in order to syphon off a lot of money. They saw the Carnival as having a great buying power. They wanted to get rich. And I fought tooth and nail, so the problems within were tremendous.

We had threats from members of the local community. Carnival was a candidate in a referendum by the Golborne 100. The police came out against us, the Council were against us, we were threatened with the arrival of the National Front in Carnival, all sorts of things. The Notting Hill Social Council showed an interest but they could not make great headway in the situation. Violence was used within the committee. Our offices were smashed and there was a great amount of suspicion that black activists who were acting in an adverse way to the Carnival did it. Anyhow, come Carnival, we took to the streets and the police came in great force and shepherded the bands around the street to the dislike of the great majority. There was an explosion between the youngsters mainly and the police in Carnival 1976. It was one of the most disturbing actions we had in the Carnival since its inception. To sum it up, Carnival '76 was the most troubled year we have had in the experience of the Carnival.

Now going from '76 to '77, how did the committee change its character and its form?

By calling all the steelbands men, mas men and sounds men and women together, seeing that we were threatened, now mainly from forces within assisted by the local authority. When I say this I mean the local authority and others were responsible for the emergence of a rival black group. We came together to protect or preserve our Carnival and a resolution was passed stating that the steelbands men, mas men, sounds men and women are the people who are truly representative of Carnival and should hold the reins. This was responsible for the change in the composition of the committee. Now, in '77, we operated on a formal basis. In previous years we have operated on an informal basis and the formality and discipline was responsible for the sort of strength which brought about a successful spectacle. . . Darcus Howe was instrumental in bringing about the change. He contributed greatly to that change through his experience in chairing and building an organisation.

Carnival '77, from the organisational and cultural point of view, was excellent, but there is still the question of conflict between young blacks and the police. What I'd like to find out is, that in the negotiations between the CDC and the police, what indication you had that the police would come with riot helmets and riot shields and what information you had about what strategy they would use?

This was indicated when the police used riot shields in the Grunwick strike. We saw it as a rehearsal for the Notting Hill Carnival '77 and we were particularly careful in pointing out to the police that their heavy presence in the Carnival operation would bring about the sort of disturbance we had in the previous year. Our programme and policy stated this quite clearly. We had information, both from within and in the press, that there was a possibility that the police would come as a militarised force.

On Carnival day the head of the police contingent was liaising with you and one understands that they wanted the bands off the streets at 6 o'clock, contrary to everything they had said before. At one point they wanted to bring in a whole lot of reinforcements inside the Carnival. What do you think they wanted to do? Why did they want the bands off the street?

First I must give you an idea of what happened in the police station on Monday morning. On Monday morning we had a meeting with the police chief Mr Helm and others, including members of the rival group. It was said that there was a slight disturbance on Sunday and there was a possibility of this thing happening on Monday. The chairman of the rival group appeared to be very nervous about this situation, and he agreed with the police that if there were any disturbances his stewards would hand over black youngsters or people who were behaving in an unsociable manner to the police. I said quite clearly that we did not have any powers of arrest and that we were totally opposed to any such action taking place.

We agreed at that meeting to have a talk about 4 o'clock Monday in order to see how things were going. I was not at that meeting, but, on my return to the Tabernacle, I was informed that the police were suggesting that all bands ought to be off the street by 6 o'clock. I opposed it. I got on to the Commander immediately and said to him that he was to instruct his officers not to get the bands off the street by 6 o'clock and he agreed. This was implemented. I pointed out to him that the Carnival was supposed to to go on until 11 o'clock and our bands were not going to be put off the streets by six. My deduction is that they were trying to stop the Carnival before its final conclusion and, maybe, they were trying to discredit it in part by picking on the spectators for a bit of a war.

What preparations are the CDC making for 1978?

We have got an ongoing programme and we are going to plan a programme of events that will include an exhibition of costumes of '77. A seminar will be held sometime in November. We haven't decided on the date as yet. This seminar is designed in order to give the community at large a composite idea of what has happened historically to Carnival and what our plans are for Carnival '78. We aim to trigger off a discussion and a feed back from our audience out of which our '78 programme will be fashioned.

MAS 77

EBONY

The Acton based Ebony Steelband emerged from Carnival 1977 as victors. They swept the board in the mas section of the Carnival Development Committee competitions — Band of the Year, Queen of the Bands, King of the Bands, Best Individual — you name it, Ebony won it.

This was their sixth Carnival on the streets of Notting Hill, and their presentation of the Witches Opera attracted some 200 masqueraders. They portrayed witches, bishops, priests, imps, devils and beasts in a supernatural fantasy.

Carnival is colour, and Ebony went for silver and black/green and orange.

Ebony is perhaps the best organised of the bands in Notting Hill Carnival. The steelband section and the mas section are coordinated for the road by an elected committee broken down into section leaders and field organisers. They have managed to mobilise within their ranks, the intricate skill of wire-bending. The Queen of the Witches, Doreen Charles, carried a head piece which must have tested the best in the wire-bending tradition.

And 1977 was not a flash in the pan. Those of us who remembered 'Things with Wings' in 1976 and 'Sea Inn' in 1975 would know that Ebony are on their way.

TRINBAGO CARNIVAL CLUB

"Gran failla Catuwama", repeated in a rhythmic chant; right foot forward, chipping two steps side ways and once backwards, his head piece swarthed in swans-down and feathers, delicately beaded. It's Lawrence Noel portraying Red Cloud on the streets of Notting Hill, Carnival Monday.

Lawrence heads the Trinbago Carnival Club whose constitution says that the club aims to promote "young people to work together to create active art". Never mind the verbal disguise, active art means mas on the streets of Notting Hill.

Trinbago has been on the streets since Carnival 1973, and this year they entertained us with the theme, Indian Fantasy. Not Indians from India but North American Indians.

The Indian theme is as much in Lawrence's blood as it is a powerful tradition in Carnival in Trinidad. Lawrence recalls the greats in this tradition — Mark Copeland, Errol Payne and Walter Gomez. These are the masqueraders who established the Indian theme as a part of Trinidad Carnival.

Nostalgically, he recalls the years on the streets of San Fernando, Trinidad, when he portrayed a Seminole Chief, a Cherokee Chief and Yellow Hand. You have to be committed to that tradition to scour Britain for a poultry farm from which to order feathers and then sit night in, night out dying them.

Lawrence takes care to point out why his mas was not an authentic reproduction of an Indian tribe. "Not enough scope for colour and invention", he says.

Funded by the Arts Council, Trinbago's mas is an ongoing project. They store their costumes and perform at different festivals throughout England.

What to expect in '78? It is a closely guarded secret, in fact a trade secret.

SUKUYA

Sukuya will not look beyond Africa for their mas theme — Man Myth and Music in 1975, African Version in 1976 and Mansa Musa's Guests at Regina's Feast in 1977.

Larry Forde is the leader of Sukuya and mas organiser of the Carnival Development Committee.

The name Sukuya is a play on a Tanzanian tribe. He describes his portrayals over the last three years as attempts to "capture the original concepts of African Art".

He has been having difficulty with obtaining a building for his mas camp and has changed location thrice in three years in the Notting Hill area.

In 1977, Mansa Musa's guests at Regina's Feast was designed and created from the Tabernacle in Notting Hill.

Mansa Musa took his following from Guinea on a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1348.

Carnival 1977, the year of the Jubilee, Larry Forde was taking his black British following through the streets of Notting Hill as guests of Regina.

A splash of gold and maroon, silk screened on African gowns, was unmistakedly Sukuya.

Not for Larry the big head piece a la Ebony. "The masquerader must be able to move around in the costume and dominate it, not the other way round."

LION YOUTH

'Lion Youth', the Rastafarian inspired band, was brought out by two women. We are textile disigners who were originally members of Sukuya.

The band was based in a workshop provided by the 12 Tribes of Israel — Jah Rastafari — who, though absent from the actual Carnival festivities, supported 'Lion Youth' throughout mas making.

On the road, the impact of the band was fired by the colours of the Ethiopian flag, green, gold and red. The women wore gold Kaftans and wraps with green and red designs printed on them in the silk screen process. Head scaves were first tie-dyed then printed on.

This blaze of colour was heightened by the flags on umbrellas carried aloft bearing the Lion of Judah and the Star of David. The "Remember Marcus Garvey" banner, was meant to remind all of Garvey's commitment to freedom for blacks.

That the actual workforce consisted of five young black women, two Dominicans, one Guyanese, one Nigerian and one Vincentian, is significant; for it threatens the male oriented, Trinidadian dominated nature of the Carnival ethic.

However, it was not intentional that the band came across as purely female. The only two male participants, in their red and white Ethiopian robes, were heavily outnumbered and perhaps outshone by the 20 women in the group.

One initial set back was the lack of money. A few weeks before Carnival the Race Today Collective, the Carnival Development Committee, Sukuya and New Beacon Books came to the rescue with contributions. The money barely covered the costs of materials.

Lion Youth see Carnival not only as an occasion for enjoyment but also as an opportunity to increase our collective awareness of our situation.

We aim to involve more people in actually producing their own costumes, thus sharing the many skills used in making mas.

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GRUNWICK STRIKE

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A NEW ERA?

LETTERS

ILEA'S Radical Reappraisal

Dear Race Today,

The Inner London Education Authority has recently announced its intention to launch a "radical reappraisal of the service it provides to London's multi-ethnic society". Such a reappraisal is open to examination on several points: there is the general point that education has a minimal effect in decreasing social disadvantage for minority groups; it could be argued that the money to be spent, particularly on salaries for the "inner city team", might more usefully be directed towards the 'minority ethnic groups' for them to use as they see fit. Another more pressing point is related to the attitudes of those who are responsible for making, carrying out and changing educational policy.

Recently this "radical reappraisal" was discussed at a meeting in County Hall of ILEA Further Education College senior staff who are concerned with non-examination courses which attract many 'ethnic minority' students to FE. At this meeting a senior member of the ILEA staff who is responsible for further and higher education in Inner London put forward his explanation for the presence of large numbers of blacks in low ability streams in schools. He cited his own experience in Trinidad where the population, he explained, was divided into those of Chinese, East Asian and African extraction. He explained that the Chinese were at the top in schools, the East Asians in the middle, and the negroes at the bottom. Teachers in Trinidad, he said, explained this quite simply:
"Man, that's the way it is."

This personal reminiscence followed my contribution to the discussion. There was only one non-white person at this meeting and he was the only one to mention the hidden racialism in Further Education. Picking up what he had said, I suggested that those present might speculate whether there could be a connection between the fact that the meeting did not reflect the people who look to Further Education for educational qualifications and the recruitment and hiring policies of ILEA colleges of further education, and whether this might not, in turn, have some connection with the placement of minority group students on low-level courses which do not lead to the academic qualifications necessary for entrance to higher education and professional training.

As there was obviously no way of discussing such a reply to my suggestions and also as I am not prepared to listen to racialist remarks I left this meeting abruptly. As I was leaving this Inspector's parting remark was that there were some people in this country who would not allow others to express such opinions as his. At that meeting, at least, there would seem to have been very few people of this type: only one person who remained at the meeting objected to the remarks made by this ILEA Inspector for Further and Higher Education.

It would appear that while the Education Officer is proposing a "radical reappraisal" of education for "multi-ethnic" groups in ILEA schools and colleges, there is at least one influential member of his staff who is prepared to make racialist remarks at a public meeting at which these policy initiatives were discussed. Also others — Inspectors, Vice-Principals, Lecturers who actually teach 'educationally disadvantaged ethnic minority' students– are prepared to hear such remarks without comment; doubtless most honestly believe that silence is the only possible response; unfortunately, a few may fear that opposition will spoil their chances for advancement; regretably their silence can be interpreted as agreement.

If the 'radical reappraisal of education for multi-ethnic groups in the ILEA', is to be carried out by people who believe that "negroes are at the bottom and that's the way it is" then the outcome for children and young people who are at the receiving end must concern all of us.

Black parents should know that their children's educational futures may be influnced by people who have racialist views.

F.J. Harper.

LABOUR IN THE WEST INDIES

THE BIRTH OF A WORKERS MOVEMENT

BY W. ARTHUR LEWIS

This latest New Beacon publication details the general strikes and workers' insurrections, which blazed across the English-speaking Caribbean between 1935 and 1938. These social upheavals affected the subsequent social and political history of the Caribbean.

Arthur Lewis's pamphlet, now reprinted here, remains the only Caribbean-wide account of these events.

This reprint includes an afterword by Susan Craig GERMS OF AN IDEA. It is an important assessment of the period since the 1930s and of W. Arthur Lewis as an influential member of the social group, who have taken over the reins of political power from the colonial regime.

Price: £1.60 approx. paperback. Publication date: December 1977.

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EDITORIAL

A VICTORY FOR BHAG

Squatters in Greater London Council (GLC) owned properties have been granted an amnesty. If they register with the GLC before November 28, they will be offered rented accommodation and become legal tenants. Otherwise, "the GLC will use all measures which the law allows against anyone who moved into one of its properties as a squatter after October 25, 1977, or who remains as a squatter after November, 1977".

Whatever the implications of this 'amnesty' are – and to be sure, there is more than meets the eye, about which we have more to say – certain important concessions have been wrung from the GLC which, if honoured, constitute a victory for immigrant Asian families in London's East End who, for the last two years, have waged a relentless, organised fight for their right to decent housing in an area of their choosing. (See article on page 150.) The victory, too, is the Bengali Housing Action Group's (BHAG), the vehicle through which several hundred Bengali families launched their fight, formed with the assistance of *Race Today* activists, with activists from Tower Hamlets Squatters Union on its Executive Committee, and with *Race Today* as its public platform.

We first entered the East End in 1974, to assist four Bengali families in Matlock Street, E.14, resist an eviction by the GLC bailiffs. We discovered then, a large number of Asian families squatting, many of whom had been on the housing list for many long years. We discovered a woeful situation of criminal and callous neglect on the part of the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and the GLC towards these families, living in council 'sink' estates, such as the Canada Estate in Poplar in 19th century conditions. We discovered families, forced to flee their tenancies in the face of violence and terror from hostile white neighbours. We discovered LEB and Gas Board officials ripping out the gas and electricity mains of squatted properties in an effort to get the families out. We discovered families, quite literally at the mercy of racketeers, who openly sold squats at extortionate prices with the connivance of local so-called community workers. We named families, places, times and events. Our agitation on this particular issue focused national attention on the housing issue as it affected the Bengali community. The scent of scandal was more than Fleet Street and the BBC could ignore and *The Sun, Sunday Times* and the BBC Nationwide programme, both gave space to this question. (See *Race Today* October '75.) After our allegations we were landed with a libel suit from a Tower Hamlets' CRC official, which we intend to fight. We discovered too a complete lack of organisation – only reaction.

The situation demanded an independently organised response from these families, the demands of which would arise directly from their particular needs and experiences. BHAG provided this response, rallied previously isolated families together, and added a new dimension to the housing struggles waged by immigrant workers and their families in Britain. BHAG's demands were:

1) Re-housing for all its members
2) That all re-housing be in the E.1. area where Asian families, supported by the strength of the community, are best able to defend themselves against racial attacks.

Its high point was the squatting of 50 Asian families in the summer of 1976, in Pelham Buildings in an empty GLC building.

Through the pages of *Race Today*, through mass demonstrations and pickets, we carried the fight right to the top – to those responsible in the corridors of power for housing and energy policies. Tony Judge, at that time Britain's largest landlord, in his position as Chairman of the Greater London Council's Housing Management Committee, found himself forced to sit at a negotiating table with Bengali workers. We took on the Home Secretary too, and demanded he take action on the miserable record of the local police in responding to violent racist attacks on individuals and families, a record which revealed where their sympathies lay. We said, 'No Retreat from the East End' (see *Race Today* June '76) and supported the organisation of Asian vigilante patrols.

So now, the GLC, who so recently were sticking to their guns of not speaking to squatters, have put out the white flag. At best it is the recognition of a political reality which stems from a two year organised assault by Asian immigrants on their racist housing policy and a recognition too of the power of the organised squatting movement generally in London, which has resulted in the occupation of 1,438 GLC properties by homeless people. At worst, however, it covers a multitude of sins and hides another reality.

The amnesty is no solution to homelessness. Behind the facade of the 'amnesty' is the GLC's counter attack aimed at breaking up and dispersing the organised pockets of resistance which squatters have built up over the years. The GLC hopes that, after November 28, it will never have to confront this force again and its intentions this time will have the backing of legislation from on high. The Criminal Trespass Bill, now in its final stages in Parliament, allows both private and state landlords to use "reasonable force" to evict squatters. Even more iniquitous is a Private Members Bill, currently being floated in Parliament by Tory MP Hugh Rossi. The essence of this Bill is, that state landlords should make only one offer of a tenancy to a family (at the moment you can have three – more if you're prepared to fight). Should a family refute the offer, then they will have rendered themselves homeless and the social services has no further responsibility to them. If incorporated into housing policy, it will hit directly families such as those who rallied to BHAG who are presently being terrorised out of their tenancies by whites who don't want them there.

There is too the reality that the housing allocation policy will remain unchanged. It will remain racist and will favour only those capable of a show of strength. Thus, the allocation of immigrant families to 'sink' estates, which white families refuse, will continue and the forcing out of black families from their homes, by racist whites, will also continue – the very conditions which brought BHAG into being.

Clearly the amnesty points to a new direction of organisation for BHAG. The concessions it has won from the GLC has thwarted, at least temporarily, the GLC's intention to disperse the families it has organised. It must, therefore, continue to provide the focus around which other families, as yet not organised, can make their fight, amnesty or no amnesty. BHAG's memebership, who presently occupy serveral houses in Varden Street and Nelson Street, which came under the Labour-controlled council of Tower Hamlets, has also waged a battle against eviction and dispersal. These families already provide a nucleus around which a wider movement must be built.

The London Borough of Tower Hamlets, as a body, have proved to be more stubborn than the GLC in their opposition to BHAG. They have not, so far, conceded to either the demand for rehousing or shown any support for BHAG's position for housing in the E.1. area.

Our demand that we be housed where we are many, arises out of our own realisation that 'ghettos' are our source of protection and strength, in the present racial climate of Britain and provides the base from which we can launch our attack for decent housing.

Race Today Collective November 1977

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"WE WON'T BE TERRORISED OUT OF EXISTENCE"

In the face of a rising campaign of terror and intimidation by racists and fascists against black and community bookshops, and in the face of apathy and downright indifference on the part of the police in apprehending those responsible, a group of London booksellers and publishers have come together to draw attention to the seriousness of the attacks. They are demanding action from the Home Secretary to deal with the situation.

On Monday, October 17, they held a press conference in the dusty, soot-laden, burnt-out ruins of the Unity Bookshop in Harrow Road.

The focus of the conference, called by several black bookshops was the total lack of action taken by the police. Their attitude had left no doubt that the police had no serious intention of dealing with these acts of terror. "What we find peculiar" said John La Rose "is that in all these attacks from 1973 to 1977 not a single person has been charged in connection with these incidents." (1973 saw the fire bombing of the first Unity Bookshop in Brixton). The police continue to ask the victims inane questions — whether they have 'enemies', if they have 'short-changed anyone', when it is clear the vandalism is the work of racists and fascists.

In a letter sent to the Home Secretary on September 19, 10 bookshops, asked why, with the surveillance apparatus at the disposal of the CID, MI5, MI6 and so on, it was impossible to apprehend the terrorists. The bookshops pointed out that, 'the continuing failure of the police and the Home Office to deal with these acts of terrorism raises the very serious question of complicity between the police and the nazi fascist forces in the country'. An illustration of this attitude was the fact that the Home Office had just spent £250,000 in protecting fascists in Manchester, while the bookshops have still not even had the courtesy of a reply from Merlyn Rees, leave alone the meeting they have been demanding since March of this year.

La Rose pointed out that the attacks described at the press conference represent only the 'tip of the iceberg'. He told the conference that since the London bookshops had come together they had heard from a number of other booksellers and publishers, both in London and outside who had also suffered similar terror. The conference ended on a word of warning. Britain should not forget that when the Nazis were striving for power in Germany, they too destroyed libraries, and bookshops and burnt books. Writers, publishers and journalists also came under attack. Today, black and community bookshops are in the front line of the fascist and racist attacks by the National Front, National Party and KKK. But the black bookshops, calling the conference, warned the fascists, the police and the Home Secretary:
'We won't be terrorised out of existence'.

THE ATTACKS IN LONDON

Bogle-L'Ouverture Bookshop, Ealing.
Vandalised on three occasions between February and October. Fascists daubed obscene racist slogans in paint twice and left National Party propaganda behind. Also, telephone threats warning, "Move out or we will get you tonight you black bastard". Police informed on each occasion, as well as Commissioner of police and Home Secretary. (See *Race Today* March/April and June/July 1977). No action taken. taken. No arrests made. Tin of paint left behind was not removed by police for forensic tests.

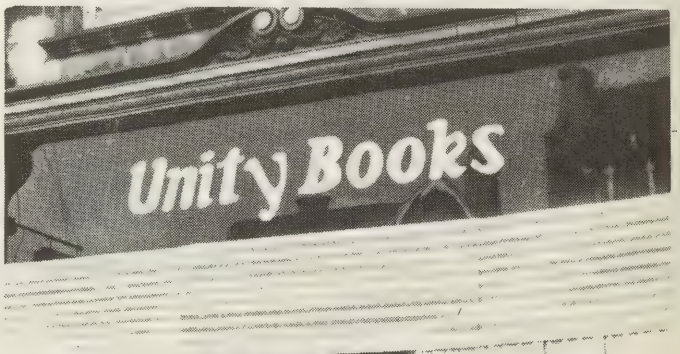
New Beacon Books, Finsbury Park.
Vandalised twice, in May and June of this year. "Niggers Out" scrawled across the brickwork below the glass of the shop and National Party stickers all over the glass. Hornsey police informed as well Commissioner of Police and Home Secretary. No action taken and no arrests made.

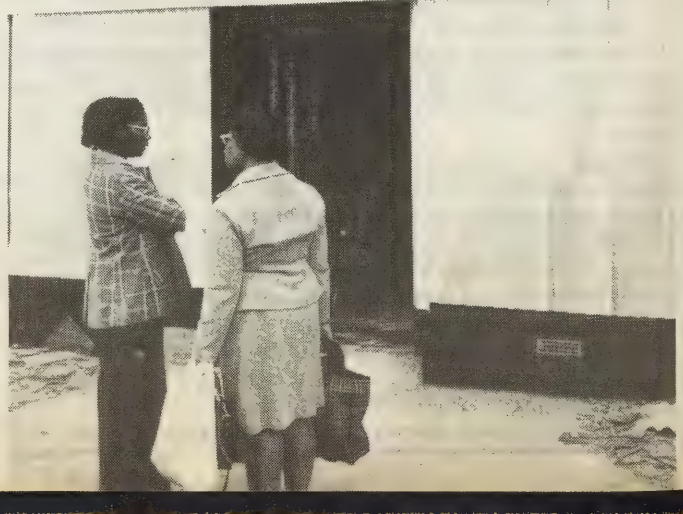
Centerprise Bookshops, Dalston.
December 24, 1976, Christmas Eve party of mainly black children is taking place when the front window is smashed.
February 21, Front window smashed.
April 19, Small hole in window — police say it is probably made by a passing car.
June 24, Front door locks filled with glue and 2 ft high racist slogans are sprayed over the front of the building.
August 14, fire bomb is thrown into bookshop.

Unity Books, North Kensington.
Petrol bombed on August 10. Virtually all the stock of books and crafts destroyed. No arrests made.

Soma Books, Kennington:
Received telephone call on September 9 warning them that their shop was to be burned down. Local police informed.

Headstart Bookshop, Wood Green:
Windows smashed. Threatening phone call on October 18.





Lance Watson, BPIC

'WANT A LIFT TO GRUNWICK?...'

Farrukh Dhondy, a member of the Race Today Collective, was one of the many hundreds of people arrested on the picket lines at Grunwick Laboratories since mass picketing began in June this year. A special magistrates' court at Barnet has been set aside to deal with these cases, most of which have resulted in guilty verdicts. Farrukh went to court on October 17, defended himself and had the case against him dismissed. Below, he has written his account of how his case was won.

"Oh, you're here Farrukh", two cops who were giving evidence against him said to Dhondy. He muttered a clumsy greeting, not being sure whether to allow their chuminess to infiltrate between him and his determination to expose them for the liars they were. His case was called, amid some negotiations from the previous case about time to pay the fine. Carrying his carrier bag of exhibits, Dhondy took the defendant's chair. Saffin was called in. A burly man in his forties, he was, even in civvies, clearly in the flat-foot trade. The smiles with which he had greeted Dhondy seemed to have melted away. As he listened to his testimony, Dhondy recalled the first time he'd come across PC Saffin: As the miners on the Grunwick picket, 300 strong, stormed the single police cordon thrown at the mouth of Chapter Road, this man had grabbed Dhondy by the shirt. The weight of his body was a live memory. It had been a clumsy arrest. Three coppers had fallen to the ground with Dhondy on the Chapter Road pavement.

"I've got you now", Saffin had shouted, amid the stomp of feet that seemed to be going over their bodies, as the miners breached the police order and stormed to the support of Arthur Scargill in the bottom of the street in which Grunwick supporters stood in puddles of dissarray. Saffin had marched Dhondy to the police van with the assistance of two other arm-twisting constables. The other demonstrators didn't look like coming to the rescue. Telling the coppers who had him by the neck and shoulders and arms that he was a journalist and should be released forthwith, seemed futile.

"So what's your name? So what do you do? So why do you bother coming up here? So don't you know you can't win, and don't you think trade unions are taking over this country, and don't you know that Barbara Castle and Harold Wilson have. . . feathered their little nests, haven't they? And what about this bloke Solzhenitsyn?" said PC Saffin, adopting an all boys together tone. For three hours he'd had to endure Saffin's attempts to enlist him to the anti-Socialist cause. He was much relieved to be thrown into a cell at Willesden with six Yorkshire miners who banged on the steel doors and yelled for room service. They talked for hours about mining and the shop steward structure and expressed that, 'Arthur better not be getting any better treatment' than them.

In the box, Saffin was a changed man. Dhondy could see he'd prepared his lines. His story was, that Dhondy had confronted the police cordon, linked arms with a single line of demonstrators, shouted, "we are trade unionists, we've got to get through", and charged the police cordon and managed to break it.

"No pressure from the back?" Dhondy asked.

"No. . . Sir".

"Did he mean to say that other strike supporters hadn't come up from behind and exerted pressure to break the cordon?" Yes, that's what he meant to say. Other strike supporters were there, hovering somewhere behind Dhondy and his linkage, encouraging them, with trade union cries, but not actually making bodily contact with that valiant line that broke the Special Patrol Group cordon.

"Do you mean to say, officer, that a trained Metropolitan police cordon of right men and burly was breached by a single line of the likes of me?" The 10 or so other policemen in the courtroom laughed. The magistrate couldn't restrain a smile. Saffin frowned. The prosecutor ran his tongue over his lips. Dhondy pulled out a shirt from his bag of exhibits and demanded to know if Saffin recognised it. "No", he said.

"Would you recall it better if I said that you wrenched the buttons and eight inches of the shirt off it by pulling one way while I was pulling the other in that encounter at the cordon?"

"I don't know."

"Could you rip the buttons off shirts if a man had his chest tightly pressed to your own?"

"I don't know." There was a smell of defeat about Saffin's answers.

Then came Sergeant Galpin. He had arrested a man that day too and had, apparently, been in the bundle on the pavement. Yes, he remembered Dhondy. No, there wasn't any pressure from the back. No, he couldn't recall whether Dhondy was with a woman companion, neither could he recognise the shirt as having been worn and torn that day. . . and so on. Other little tell-tale 'facts' fell out of his testimony. The magistrate was following the dialogue avidly.

Dhondy's own testimony described how he had risen early that fateful day, and worn his school clothes (for he's a schoolteacher) and gone to Grunwick with Leila Hassan as *Race Today* representatives. He told of how he'd first talked to the strikers in Gujerati and then tried to get an earful of Mr Scargill's rhetoric. He told how, apart from *Race Today,* he had been asked by the *Times of India* to do a piece on Grunwick and had since written for the *Economic and political Weekly and Debonair* in Bombay on the strike and its events and significance.

The prosecutor asked him if it wasn't true that he had gone as a reporter and then got carried away and assaulted the police cordon. No, Dhondy said, it wasn't his habit to attack police cordons with people he didn't know. Nor would he contemplate militant action without being part of a viable force of people who had considered the meaning and consequence of such action. As the prosecutor ducked to the back of the court to consult with Saffin and Galpin, Dhondy, a trifle unfamiliar with the sequence of the trial, volunteered the information that, his witness and exhibits awaited presentation.

"No", said the magistrate, sending Dhondy back to the defendant's seat. He was convinced that the charge of obstruction didn't hold water. He didn't want to see any exhibits or to hear Miss Hassan's testimony. The charge of threatening behaviour didn't hold either.

"And, by the way, Mr Dhondy", he added, "on your way back to Lavender Hill, *don't* go past Chapter Road."

PC's Saffin and Galpin walked out of court a little sheepishly. "Don't take it like that, Farrukh", Saffin said, as Dhondy related events to Leila. Then again, crossing paths in the street, "I expected to see you at the Hackney demonstration, Farrukh, on Saturday, why weren't you there? It was your Marxist lot."

"Want a lift to Grunwick, Farrukh?" Galpin asked.

EAST END NOTES
By Mala Dhondy, Race Today Collective

BHAG CONFRONTS THE GLC

In the East End of London today, Asian workers and their families waiting to be rehoused occupy hundreds of flats and houses, owned either by the Greater London Council (GLC) or the London Borough of Tower Hamlets. The occupation of these derelict properties, most of them up for eventual demolition under the council's redevelopment scheme, began in 1973.

During the summer of '76 the Bengali Housing Action Group (BHAG) squatted Pelham buildings, a run down tenement block in the heart of the Bengali ghetto. The GLC, who owned the property, asserted what pressure it could — threats of physical eviction, notices to quit and a refusal to negotiate. The fight was on.

A few months later, the authorities conceded and a temporary truce was called. Official supplies of gas and electricity were granted and the GLC indicated that it was prepared to consider BHAG's demands. The first battle had been won. The result, a tacit agreement that negotiations would begin on the question of rehousing for all when the time came — ie. when the council's redevelopment scheme for the area, then on ice due to a lack of funds, came into force. The money required for this redevelopment is still not available. County Hall has now changed hands. It's new administrators, the Tories have stated publicly that they intend to "restore law and order in housing".

September '77, after months of silence, notices to quit from the GLC are served on all the families in Pelham Buildings. The deadline is 28 days. Normal legal procedures have not been followed. No one is taken to court. No possession orders have been granted against any of the families.

BHAG prepares itself for a confrontation with the newly elected Tory Council by issuing a leaflet to local groups and organisations and to *Race Today,* asking for active support in this battle with the GLC. The 28 day deadline comes and goes and, within days, there is an unexpected development. George Tremlett, housing policy chairman of the GLC, makes a public statement, declaring an amnesty for 'all squatters in GLC properties'.

BHAG responds by writing to George Tremlett on October 31.
"We have registered our presence in Pelham Buildings with the GLC for some 18 months now. Yet, very recently, you sent all the families living in Pelham Buildings notices to quit. You say you want us out 'within 28 days'. Why do you differentiate between Asian families and other squatters occupying your properties all over London? We do not know, whether in the light of your recent public statement, you have changed your mind. The notices to quit have not been withdrawn and, as things stand, we are faced with the threat of physical eviction. Your threat, if carried out, would render close to 250 Asian men, women and children homeless."

The letter continues and drives home the issue on which BHAG has made a consistent stand:
". . . You say also, that a single offer of rehousing will be made to all squatters, making it clear that the flats offered will be on those housing estates that families on your waiting list refuse to take for one reason or another. If you are at all familiar with the situation facing the Asian community in the East End of London, you will know that there are certain areas of the borough in which it is impossible for Asian people to live because of the racial violence perpetrated against us by members of the National Front and their supporters."

This point is illustrated by the case of Mr Somru Miah and his family. Their story was recently reported in the East London Advertiser (October 28, 1977) in an article headed *'Hounded by thugs — then new shock'.* The 'new shock' was the threat of eviction by the GLC who, under the previous management committee, headed by Tony Judge, had assured BHAG that the matter would be investigated and a solution worked out. Somru Miah and his family were allocated a flat by the GLC, in Stringer House, Nuttal Street, Hackney. In 1975, three years after they had moved in, a campaign of racial terror against them begun. National Front leaflets, with threats scribbled on them, were pushed through their letter box. When entering or leaving the building, members of the family were constantly set upon by gangs of white youth. On one occasion, Mr Miah's 15 year old son was involved in a knife attack. The windows of their flat were systematically smashed by the same gangs, who also set fire to the family's washing and threw shit at their front door. Police were repeatedly called to the flat. Everytime they came and left, doing nothing. The attacks against the family intensified as the gangs gained more and more confidence from police apathy. Several requests were made to the GLC asking for an official transfer. There was no response, except for the fact that GLC workmen would occasionally come to repair the damage caused by these attacks. Eventually, with the assistance of BHAG, the Miah family abandoned the flat and moved into a squat in a safer area.

Therefore, in conclusion, BHAG's letter demands a meeting with George Tremlett to discuss:

" 1. The question of rehousing with regards to our members in Pelham Buildings.
2. The position with regard to rehousing or transfering Asian tenants who have experienced extreme forms of racial terror on your housing estates in East London."

The GLC were reluctant at first to meet BHAG. Finally, on November 10, they agree to meet a delegation at a centre set up for interviewing all squatters before the deadline expires. Mr Snosill, Tremlett's assistant, does the talking. Negotiations concentrate on BHAG's demand for rehousing in the E.1. area, which Snosill says he will "bear in mind and make offers in this framework as far as is practicable". The delegation presses him further until, he concedes, that he will write to the GLC District Housing Manager spelling out that preference for the E.1. area must be given to Asian applications. He asks BHAG to draw up a list of acceptable housing estates and concludes, "as far as possible, we will try and offer your members flats on those estates. If there are any problems, feel free to call on me and I will look into the matter".

These concessions from the GLC are what BHAG has been campaigning for over three years, through confrontation and negotiation. Will the GLC stand by what, so far, is merely a verbal agreement?

For further information contact:
The Bengali Housing Action Group,
169 Pelham Buildings,
Woodseer Street, London E.1. or;
Race Today — 01-737 2268.

GRUNWICK STRIKE
THE BITTER LESSONS

Over the last 10 years, Asian workers have established themselves as determined and uncompromising fighters on the industrial fronts of Britain. The struggle at Grunwick Processing Laboratories, now in its fifteenth month, is the most recent in a long line of battles which comparatively small Asian workforces have fought in their war of advancement against management, departments and forces of the state and the trades unions.

Viewed as part of the history of Asian workers' struggles in Britain, the strike at Grunwick, in north west London, has some significant distinguishing features. As never before, the determination to abolish the relationship between sweated labour and sweatshop owners has been spotlighted as a national cause. As never before, the small Asian workforce has won sporadic support from sections of the white working class.

However, the Grunwick strike demonstrates that a victory, a path out of the apparent deadlock, is only possible if the lessons of the last 10 years are absorbed and an autonomous leadership emerges which is capable of an international appeal and is free from the traps inherent in unionism.

"THE RIGHT TO JOIN A UNION" — THE STRATEGY OF THE STRIKE COMMITTEE

From the first day of their walk-out on August 23, 1976, the strategies adopted by the Grunwick strikers in waging their struggle, have been led by and dominated by the Brent Trades Council in the person of Jack Dromey. Dromey is from the left-wing of the trades union movement which sees unions as vehicles of positive action but views the present leadership of unions as active obstructors of this action.

Placing their faith in the union, the strike committee of Grunwick launched an assault last year on three fronts. Today, on all three fronts, after massive publicity, after 14 months of lone, isolated pickets, and mass pickets since June 1977, after drawing the concern of the two main political parties, after threatening to split the union movement, they face defeat.

Firstly, in June and July this year they managed, through the appeal of the 'fundamental right of unionisation' to draw the support of union branches of miners, of engineers, of building workers and others, who came to support their mass pickets. The leadership of the strike committee used the support they got on the picket line as a publicity weapon and not as a force to stop the bus carrying scabs into the factory. Policemen have been injured, 700 pickets have been arrested, Members of Parliament have been carried away in black marias, but the bus has gone through. Outside, the hubbub. Inside, business as usual.

Secondly, the strike committee sought the support, through 'rank and file' action and, through official union structures, of workers in other trades. Twice in the year the postal workers of Cricklewood, acting valiantly against the dictates of the officials of the Postal Workers Union, blacked Grunwick's mail. The strategy threatened to cut off George Ward's lifeline of postal work — films for processing, money, cheques, orders. At the point at which the tactic looked like succeeding, July 29, to be precise, Norman Stagg, the Assistant General Secretary of the union, was sent down to threaten the postal workers with a loss of their membership and consequent loss of their livelihood if they didn't move the Grunwick mailbags. In an attempt to extend this strategy, the Grunwick Strike Committee asked Roy Grantham, the general secretary of their union, Association of Professional, Executive, Clerical and Computer Staffs (APEX) to take a resolution to the annual conference of the Trade Union Congress (TUC) demanding the denial of electricity, gas, and water supplies to Grunwick. The APEX resolution, which reached the TUC conference, didn't do anything of the sort.

Cover of *Socialist Challenge* 3.11.77, paper of the International Marxist Group.





Perivale Gutterman, 1974.



Mansfield Hosiery, 1972.

It asked for a more generalised support for the Grunwick strike. This resolution was passed.

A month later the strike committee, again acting on advice from the Brent Trades Council, found itself picketing the General Council of the TUC, which was entrusted with carrying out the resolution. On the pavement outside Congress House, they told the members of the council that TGWU trucks had crossed their picket-line to take oil for the electricity generators inside Ward's factory. In return, they were told that the postal union was still considering ways of getting around breaking the law; that the electricity workers couldn't be asked to deny Grunwick its power as it would mean blacking out a whole district. This month, however, the unofficial strike of power workers has blacked out whole cities in Britain.

Thirdly, the strike committee agreed to use the machinery of state to settle their dispute with Ward. APEX called in the government sponsored Arbitration, Conciliation and Advisory Service, (ACAS). ACAS conducted a survey amongst the Grunwick workers on the question of whether they wanted to join a union. Ward, the owner of Grunwick, showed his contempt for the procedure by stopping ACAS from surveying his scabs. ACAS found for the strikers. Since ACAS, however, has no powers to impose its decision on Ward or any other employer, the case went to court. In the High Court Lord Widgery ruled that ACAS was right. With financial help and advice from the National Association For Freedom and, with the backing of the Tory shadow cabinet, Ward appealed. Lord Denning in the appeal court ruled against ACAS, who then asked for leave to take the case to the higher court, the House of Lords. The legal wrangling, the recourse to government enquiry led by Lord Scarman, has been used by Roy Grantham and the unions, as a reason to withold militant action on the Grunwick picket line. It was precisely this 'wait and see what happens through the proper channels' line that induced the strike committee to call off their 'day of action' scheduled for August 8, when thousands of trades unionists were to assemble outside Grunwick and close it down.

The strategy that the Grunwick strike committee has accepted and worked hard upon is a denial of their own history. This has been its greatest weakness.

THE BATTLES OF THE 60's AND THE 70's

Through the battles of the 60's and 70's, in small textile factories, plastics, electrical components and the larger heavy sector industries, such as foundries and motor assembly and engineering works, as well as in the labouring and servicing industries, Asian workers have established new modes and strengths of organisation.

In the late 60's, the foundries of the West Midlands exploded in strike after strike by Asian workers. Foundry workers were working for as little as £14 a week. They worked with molten metal at 1400 degrees centigrade and often suffered burns and injuries. They weren't given apprenticeships and there was a division in the factory between skilled whites and unskilled blacks which the union reinforced.

In 1968 at the Midland Motor Cylinder Company, Asian workers protested against the promotion of a white worker above their heads in their work section. They struck until he was withdrawn. In 1969 at Newby and Son, another foundry, 80 Asian workers were dismissed after an unofficial strike for a higher wage. Also in that year, Asian workers went on strike at Shotton Bros., for a 35% increase in their wage. Twenty two workers were dismissed. Only a few weeks earlier, the union had negotiated a wage agreement with management.

The textile industries of the East Midlands in the early 70's was the battleground on which Asian workers fought for higher wages and better working conditions. In May 1972, in Nottingham, Pakistani production workers at Crepe Sizes went on strike against the sacking of five men. They worked a compulsory 84 hour week for a weekly wage of £35.40 in dirty and dangerous working conditions. In December 1972, at Mansfield Hosiery in Loughborough, Asian workers went on strike for higher wages and against their denial of promotion to the skilled sections of production. E.E. Jaffe and Malmic Lace in Nottingham in May/June 1973, was the scene of a major dispute battle by Asian workers. Their strike was the culmination of 10 months of organisation inside the factory in which they had built up a branch of the TGWU and attempted to get management to recognise it. They produced a 10 point list of grievances which included a rise in the basic rate of £17.60 for a 40-hour week.

In Middlesex in 1974 Asian workers at Perivale Gutterman and Pakistani workers at Punfield and Barstow fought for bonuses and against management's push for productivity. At Perivale Gutterman 75 were dismissed.

A hundred other cases could be quoted.





IMPERIAL TYPEWRITERS '74 — THE HIGH POINT

The struggle at Imperial Typewriters in 1974, was a high-point of these earlier battles. Asian workers in the Leicester factory, a large section of them women, most of them refugees from Uganda, took on the international combine which owned Imperials. The strike started from a gut feeling of economic wrong-doing and racial exploitation. It developed into an all out battle against the management, the agencies of the state which attempted to mediate and the TGWU, which denied support to the strikers and attempted to assist the management in defeating them.

The impetus of Imperial set an example to other Asian workforces in and around Leicester. Throughout their three month strike, the Asian workforce of Leicester stood shoulder to shoulder. The strike committee, consisting of the workers themselves, ran democratic meetings to air grievances and decide on strategy and were able to mobilise international action on their behalf. They fended off the advances of white left organisations, they handled the media superbly and came to national prominence by declaring that their Asian identity was a strength and an organising focus.

In the absence of union recognition and support for the duration of the three month strike, the strikers relied solely on the resources of their own community. All strikers were regularly visited and given financial assistance where necessary. Fund raising benefits were held and Asian shopkeepers and businessmen were urged to give financial assistance and goods on credit.

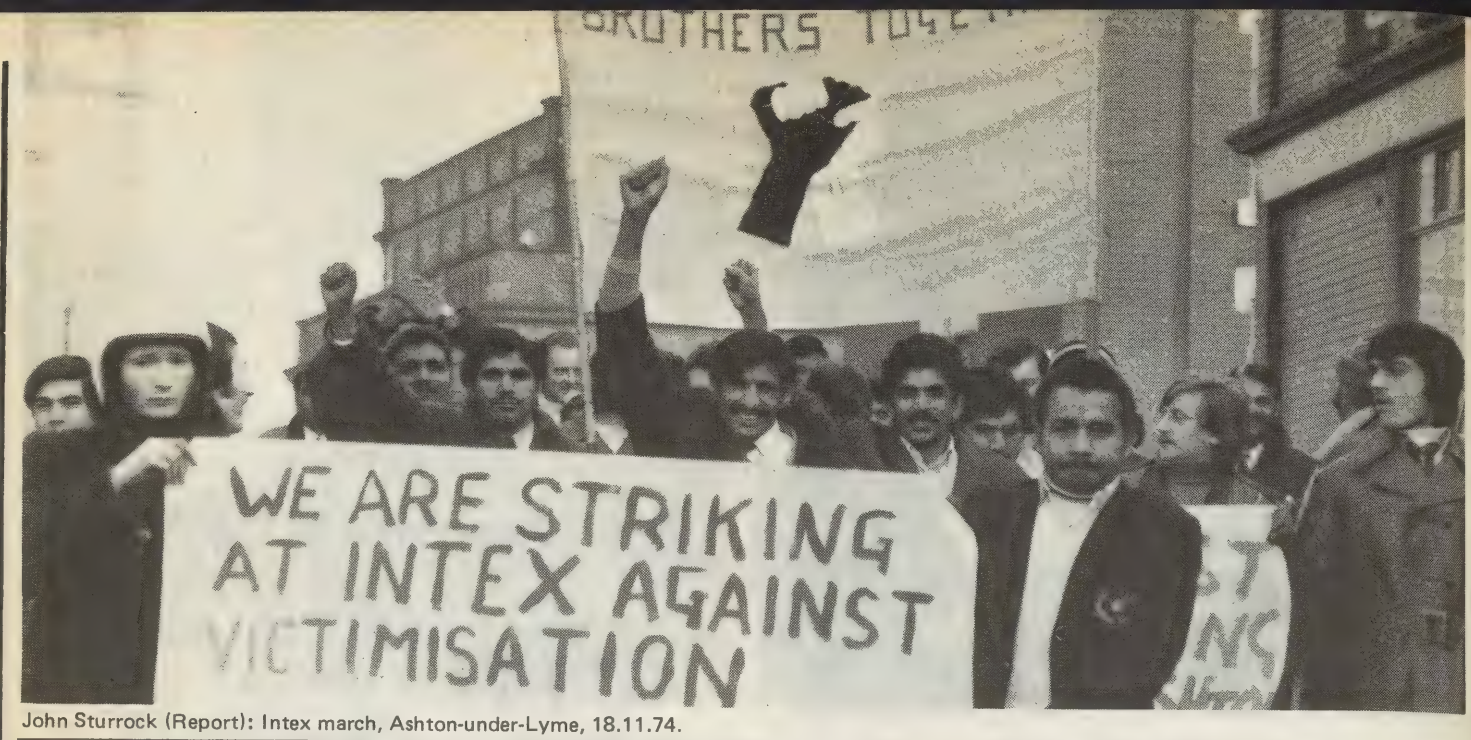
At the final meeting of the strikers, a section of the strike committee, who were in favour of using the momentum that the strike had nationally developed to demand nationalisation of the factory, were defeated. The workers didn't want to go back to the factory. For them nationalisation meant business as usual. 'Anywhere but back there', was their decision. The factory was closed.

UNION OPPOSITION

After Imperials, other Asian workforces, in Leicester, unified through an interchange of experience, took action. Kenilworth Components, Delta Mouldings, Barrington Products, all factories engaged in the manufacture of plastics, took assistance from the militants of Imperials and brought their factories to a standstill.

The history of Asian shop-floor struggles is a massive indictment of the role, structure and function of trades unions in Britain. In every single case of Asian workers action, a reliance on the good offices of the union to which they belonged, be it the Hosiery Workers Union, AUEW or the TGWU, has led to a defeat of the action.

In the Newby strike in '69, Asian workers burnt their AEF union cards after being told by their union official that "those who wanted to stay out of the factory should stay out and those who wanted to work should go in". In every case we've quoted in the Midlands, the TGWU turned its broad back on Asian militancy. In no case did the union instruct the white workers to join the Asians in support of their demands. At Mansfield Hosiery Mills the union backed the management in word and deed. At Imperials, George Bromley, the TGWU's district official in Leicester, saw to it that the strikers weren't officially backed by the union. On Radio Leicester he said that he had examined the grievances of the strikers and found no substance in them. The story is repeated through the catalogue of struggles. Each separate encounter proves that the union, at best, was incapable of carrying the energy of militant workers to a victorious fight against the management. At worst, the union was denounced through the struggles as being a tool of management and a pacifying agency of the state.



John Sturrock (Report): Intex march, Ashton-under-Lyme, 18.11.74.

WHAT GRUNWICK DENIES ITSELF

The power of Asian workers, accumulated through years of shop floor battles against white union opposition and management treachery, has been defused in the Grunwick confrontation.

The Grunwick workers, like their predecessors in sweatshops elsewhere, did not walk out of the job primarily on the issue of union entry. They walked out because they were prepared to tolerate no longer the abuse, the exploitation, the near starvation wages and awful conditions of work. They have viewed industrial struggle in a 'foreign' land as something akin to a war of community emancipation. "We are fighting the slavery of it all", said workers of Imperial Typewriters in Leicester in '74. "We expected to find better conditions over here, which is why we are the first on the picket line, the first to fight for a better deal", says a glass factory workers battling the wage freeze of '68; "The treatment we got was worse than the slaves slaves in Roots' said Mrs Jayabehn Desai of the Grunwick strikers in 1977.

What we are witnessing is a take-over bid for the independent movement of Asian workers by the left-wing of the labour movement, whose immediate interest is to keep the union kite flying.

Scargill, Dromey and co., have paraded the Grunwick struggle as being symbolic of the fundamental right of a worker to belong to a union. The Grunwick strikers have been likened to the Tolpuddle Martyrs and the East End Match Girls. This is not the tradition from which they come. This time, the emotional appeal to defend unionism has succeeded in drawing thousands of white workers to the Grunwick picket lines. However, this does not mean that white workers are there supporting a strike by black workers. This has yet to happen. They are there on the issue of 'defending the trades union movement'.

As we have pointed out, the strategy that the Grunwick strikers have subsumed themselves to is a complete denial of their own history. The Asian community has used its community cohesiveness as a major weapon in their industrial battles. At Imperial Typewriters—as in other factories before and after—the struggle was strengthened by the recruitment system within the factory, which built up a network of friends and relatives employed across the shop floor. It made for solidarity both inside and outside the factory and provided material and moral support to the strikers and their families.

This source of power was recognised as far back as 1967, in an official report produced by Barbara Castle's Commission on Industrial Relations for the Secretary of State of Employment and Productivity. It states:

> "Management's employment policies have led to the reinforcement of this cohesion (between Punjabi workers) because managers allow their existing Punjabi workers to suggest recruits. In terms of numbers this was a successful policy, but it had the effect of transferring to groups of workers, the power to determine their own composition, because workers put forward those with whom they had ties within the wider community. The effect of this policy was to create groups which are held together by a powerful set of mutual obligations . . ."

Although this same pattern of employment is repeated at Grunwick, it has not been used with anything like the same effectiveness as before. From the outset of the Grunwick walk-out, its strikers have been led to believe that mobilising white workers had to be their primary purpose; that only this could deliver them from the jaws of bondage. Fourteen months later, no victory is in sight.

An appeal has been made to black workers, particularly Asian workers, for their support. A leaflet issued by the strike committee as part of its mobilisation for the 'Day of Reckoning' on November 7, is 'An Appeal to All Asian Workers', and states:

> "Our dispute is of vital importance for our community and the whole trades union movement. If Ward and the National Association for 'Freedom' defeat us, then immigrant workers will have been denied the right to join a trade union."

Not surprisingly, this appeal has fallen on deaf ears. Our history as black workers and our experience of trades unions in this country, has forced us to create our own methods and vehicles of struggle.

Within the last 10 years, the movement of blacks internationally, the activities of young blacks and black workers in Britain, has catapulted race into the forefront of everyone's lives and laid the basis for a powerful national and international linkage of our struggles. It is a source Grunwick has not tapped.

Thus, while the Grunwick struggle takes into consideration the powerful appeal that an Asian workforce can make today, after years of demonstrated strength to sections of the white working class, it has merely added to the list of bitter lessons that an Asian workforce must learn in Britain.

INDIA: THE NEW REGIME

AN INTERVIEW WITH GEORGE FERNANDES

George Fernandes is Minister of Industry in the Janata Government of India, which came to power on the toppling of the emergency regime of Indira H. Gandhi.

Fernandes rose to national prominence as a labour and trade union leader in the 60's. In that decade, he was in the forefront of strikes and agitations for higher wages and better working conditions which hit Maharashtra state and Bombay city. As a nominee of the Socialist Party, he went to Delhi as a member of parliament and, for years, sat on the opposition benches as a spokesman for trade unionists. He also campaigned constantly in parliament against the corruption that characterises business, the 'black money' market and government.

In 1974, Fernandes came to international prominence when he led the national Indian railway strike – one of the most powerful strikes in the history of the 70's. The strike brought out one and a half million workers and compelled Indira's government to unleash a reign of army and police terror against the striking railwaymen, their families, their politicians and supporters. Fernandes himself was inevitably arrested and imprisoned. After the defeat of the strike and his release from prison, he returned to parliament and campaigned for the reinstatement of the thousands of railway workers who had been dismissed as revolutionary agitators from their jobs, and for the release of hundreds of others whom the government kept in prison without trial under laws of preventative detention.

During the 18 months of the Emergency, Fernandes went underground, fleeing from charges of conspiracy to cause explosions and overthrow the state. He was arrested, charged and imprisoned during the final months of the Emergency. While in Tehar jail, he issued a statement declining the invitation of the Socialist Party to join the Janata Front – later to merge into the Janata Party – to fight the Congress Party at the elections. He later reversed his judgement and joined the united front, accepting ministerial office in the new government of coalesced parties. As he sat in jail, for the second time, he says he thought, 'God help those who are given the responsibility of running the country'. He is now in that position.

On a ministerial visit to the west, Fernandes spoke to *Race Today*. From our taped interviews with him, we have extracted a few points of enquiry – Janata's plans for the Indian economy, political prisoners and family planning, evils which the Janata Government is now called on to provide other answers to. And finally, Indian workers abroad. In the interview, he gives an indication of where the Janata government stands on these crucial questions.

On the regeneration of Indian industry, the Minister outlines for the first time for an international public his government's strategy on industry. Janata was not elected on the merits of any economic programme. They came to power on the wave of struggle against the tyranny of a Congress regime which had turned to terror to silence opposition to the stagnation and starvation that 30 years of Congress economic policy has brought to the country. Janata's programme can now be seen as a reformed strategy, to put money and new life into this same economic structure. The contracts under which foreign investment is allowed will be changed and be made less exploitative. At the rural level, small industry will provide the bulk of the jobs to solve India's problem of 40 million unemployed over the next 10 years.

In the course of the interview, the Minister makes, on behalf of his government, a promise to release the political prisoners who were imprisoned by Indira and are still languishing in India's jails. It is a promise which can and must afford a focus for the agitation around this issue in India. We also ask him about compulsory sterilisation and the economic pressure on peasants and workers to subject themselves to population control.

Lastly, we asked Mr Fernandes about his government's policy towards Indian workers abroad. On his own admission, one of the chief sources of foreign exchange for the Indian economy is the contribution of India's international labour force – those of us who form the Asian immigrant communities of Britain, Canada, the Middle East and the Far East. While talking about using the resources of exported labour, the Minister admits that Janata has no policy, to his knowledge, on the rights and treatment of Indians abroad.

Can you briefly outline your function as Minister of Industry and give our readers some insight into what proposals the Janata Party has for the economy of India?

As Minister of Industry, I'm concerned with the making of industrial policy. At least, I'm the minister responsible for it, although I believe that the entire government is concerned. Just now, I see my job as Minister of Industry primarily to relate industry to eliminating unemployment and to reducing income and regional disparities in the areas of development. These are some of my tasks – making industry responsible to social needs. At the time of the elections I was sitting in Tehar jail, thinking 'God help those who are given the responsibility of running the country'. The economy of the country was in such a bad shape that it was going to be quite an uphill task for anyone to set it right. At that point in time, I did not realise that I would be among those charged with the responsibility of setting things right. Therefore, today, as part of the government of India, in a ministry which is a key economic ministry, I can only say that the problems are overwhelming.

We have inherited 40 million unemployed. Talking to my friends and comrades in Europe, particularly in the trades union movement, is quite an experience. They are also concerned about rising unemployment in their respective countries, but they talk about unemployment in so many hundred thousands. We have 40 million. The Janata Party is committed to eradicating unemployment and removing all poverty in the next 10 years. It's what our manifesto says. So, 10 years from today, we will have to create 100 million jobs. That is to say 10 million jobs need to be created every year for the next 10 years. This is the size of the problem we have inherited.

In the last 30 years, through five year plans and three one year plans, we created a situation where we planned for unemployment and not for employment. Each plan ended up with more unemployment in India. Now we have to make a start in a totally new direction. Our projections are, that we have to create 100 million jobs in the next 10 years for the 40 million already unemployed and for the six to seven million who keep joining the labour market every year.

How do you intend to create these jobs?

The Janata Party has talked about following the Gandhian path. Now this means, not necessarily, a reversal of direction, but it does mean a shifting of emphasis in respect of many things. So, when we talk today through our manifesto and through the policies of the government of the small unit machine, what we are trying to do is shift the emphasis from big industry to small scale industry, to the local, to the cottage industries, which are labour intensive.

Recently we have been meeting. By 'we' I mean the Minister of Industry, officials of the ministry, the Industry Minister of the Bihar government, together with a number of his senior officials from the local government, plus a few non-officials who have certain ideas about what should be done. About 60 or 70 of us sat down for two days and nights and discussed, not generalities, but divided ourselves into workshops. We discussed plans of action for the different areas of industry, which we then integrated into a whole. We were able to identify a number of industries and a number of areas which would create direct employment in the manufacturing processes and allied jobs – about 100,000 in the next 18 months. With the multiplied effect of those jobs in the manufacturing process and the jobs in the agricultural sector, we have a plan of action which should create about one million jobs in the north of Bihar in the next 18 months.

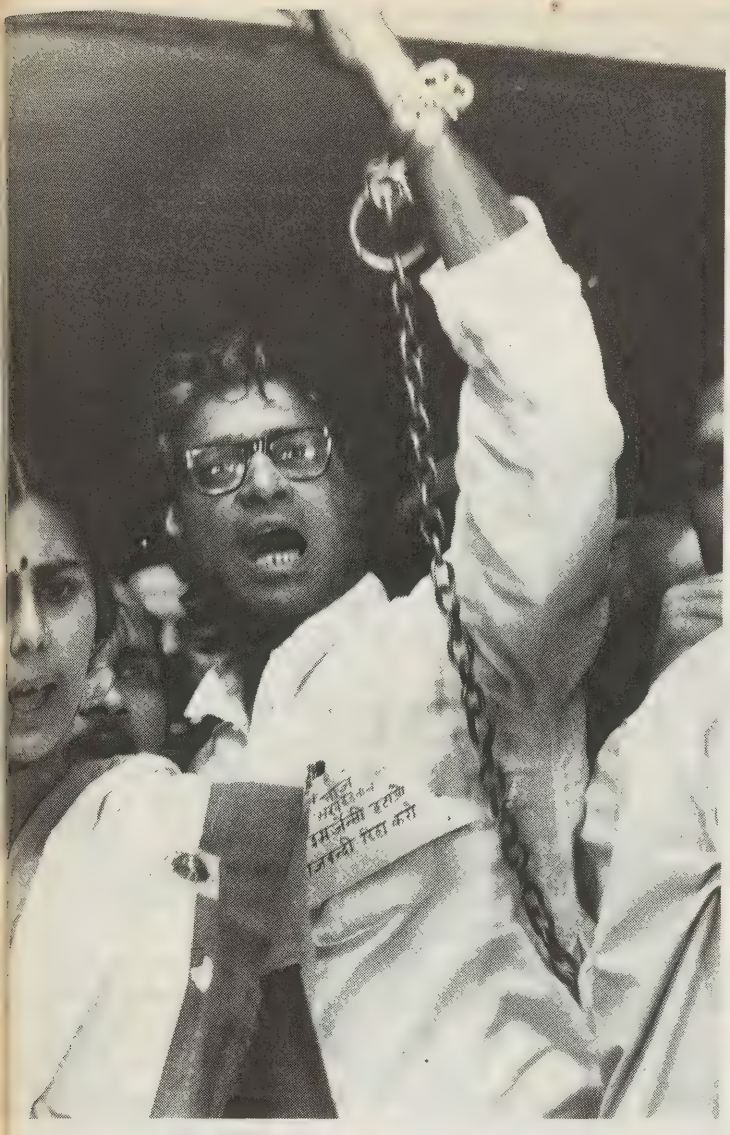
We are going to put ourselves through a similar exercise in the eastern district of Uttar Pradesh in the next few weeks. Then we will repeat these models for the entire country.

Can you be more precise about your concept of small scale industry in terms of the Indian economy?

When one discusses small unit technology in India, we are not discussing something very new. Socialists in India have been discussing it for the last 26 to 30 years. In fact, in 1952, the presidential address to the conference of the Socialist Party was a thesis on the small unit machine. It was a plea to the government to shift its emphasis, to move away from big industry to the small unit machine. It was a call to scientists to forget the laboratories of Britain and the US and think of the laboratories India has and to apply technology to conditions in India. But, for the last 25 years, that was a cry in the wilderness. Today, not only those of us to whom the concept of the small unit machine was a very vital idea, but also those who have since accepted it, have now been entrusted with the responsibility of making policy in India.

This does not mean that big industry can be done away with. We still need steel and we still need cement. In fact, if small unit industry is to be successful, it will have to be supported by heavy industry. 250,000 villages in India still need clean drinking water. To sink the wells, to pipe the water, we need cement. We need steel and all the tools. Most of this big industry can produce. Cement is one of those areas where a lot of investment is required. For a half-million ton cement plant, you need 300 million rupees. That is big business whether the state runs it or the private sector runs it. 250,000 villages also need to be linked with roads. For this we need steel and aluminium. Power is another thing. Solar energy, for instance, can be developed. We have all the sources of energy but they need to be tapped and we have to do this very fast. All this is big industry – power generators, building dams and so on.

Agricultural India too has tremendous potential. This year we have again had a very good monsoon so there will be another bumper harvest. We already have two million tons of grain all stored up and I think some of us don't even know what to do with it. We have, therefore, initiated Food for Work Programmes. This is another job creation scheme. Agriculture can absorb a large number of people because I think it is possible for us to improve our yields from the land and to improve our food production. We mean to do this in three specific areas. One, where cotton is concerned. Cotton production has been on the decline. This has meant not only the import of cotton, but it has also meant a lot of problems where textiles are concerned. Two, in the area of edible oil



George Fernandes wearing symbolic chains to remind supporters just exactly what was at stake when the people of India went to the polls.

seeds – groundnuts and other oil seeds. Here again, over the years there has been a consistent decline in production which has created a lot of problems for us. We do not have an adequate supply so we have to import a lot of edible oils but that cannot be in a country where there is so much land, where it is possible to increase the yield from the land. And, three, in the area of pulses. We need pulses and we can't import pulses. Everywhere else they eat meat for their protein. We are the only people who eat 'dhal' instead. The result of the efforts taken in these areas will not be available in six months. It will take at least a year before we see results coming in, but I believe we have set about solving the problems of agriculture and agricultural production. Together with the concept of small scale industry and going to the areas where the problems are, I believe we will be able to meet the challenge of production and employment.

You mentioned food for work programmes. Presumably, the concept of these programmes is the same as those which caused major riots in Bangladesh last year. What is your view, as a socialist, of these programmes?

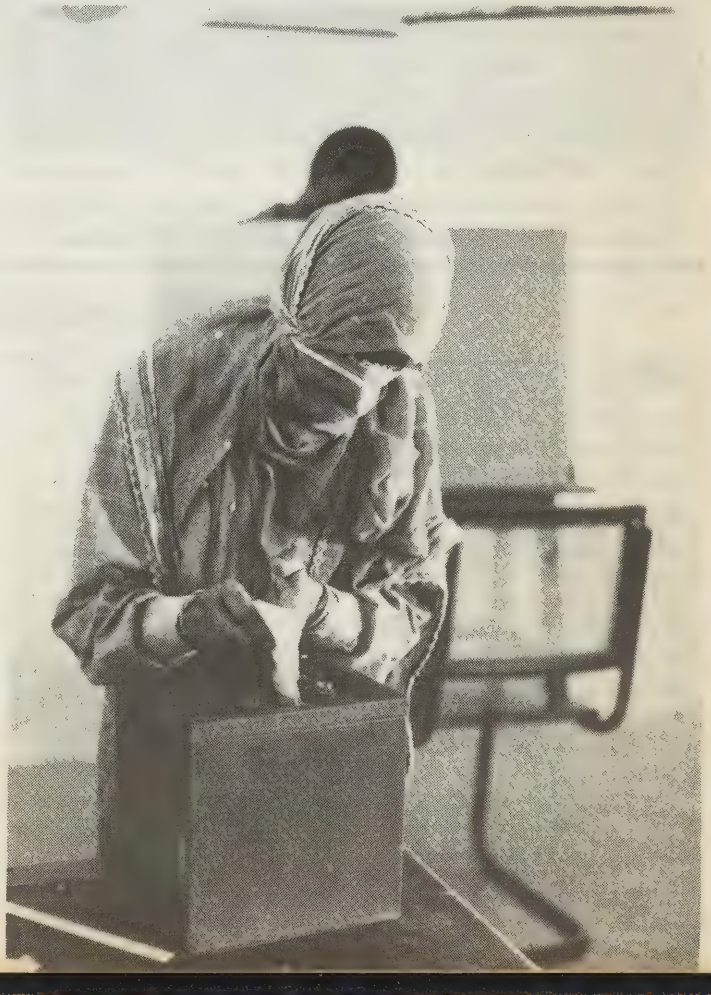
Personally, I am for making it a national programme. We have just started in a very small way in Bihar and the idea is to expand it. I don't see anything wrong with giving people food grain in the shape of wages. Frankly, I am not aware of the trouble it generated in Bangladesh, but I will tell you that, in Maharashtra, where we have tried this kind of programme in times of drought, it has been well received. After all, even our trade unions have been asking for payments in kind. One of the demands of our railway strike was that we be given food grains at concessional rates, which, in other words, was asking for payment in kind. There is a large number of unemployed in the rural areas who are being given a job and are being compensated for it by payment in kind instead of payment in cash. Otherwise they would be without a job and without food.

You said earlier in your lecture that no plan could succeed unless the money to implement it was raised first. Will the lack of capital not effect the plans you have just outlined?

If it is necessary for me to fall back on capital from abroad then I will have to do that. We will, of course, insist on our own terms when we accept such forms of foreign investment. Not on their terms and not in just any areas of their choice. The same point of view holds with regard to our own industrialists. There will be regulations and laws to prevent big industry from moving in where small scale industry is being developed. Within these limitations, I need to encourage all investment, wherever it comes from – private sources, public sources or whatever.

Is it not true that this grain was previously donated by the US and other international agencies such as the World Health Organisation?

No, the grain does not come from outside agencies. It is distributed through the Food Corporation of India and comes from the store of surplus grain we already have.



POLITICAL PRISONERS

What is the Janata Government doing about releasing the thousands of political prisoners detained during the emergency under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA)?

As of now, there is hardly anyone in prison under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act. If there are a few cases that remain today, they may be people against whom there are other charges for which they are being prosecuted. I am not the Home Minister so I have no access to files or the minutest details, but I have a broad knowledge and understanding of what is happening in government or what the state government is doing. Ultimately, all releases are through the state government. The central government is not concerned with releasing people and, therefore, I do not have any feedback that comes to me as to how many are released and how many are inside.

Bihar, Bengal and Andra are the states with the largest number of prisoners. I have been to Bihar, and, as a result of certain discussions, the prisoners have been released. In fact, Mary Tyler met me here and said that the question of political prisoners had now been eased both in Bihar, in Bengal and in the north.

The greatest problem has been identifying those people sentenced as criminals from those who are supposed to have committed a breach of the Indian Penal Code and are serving vigorous prison sentences as ordinary convicts. This is why we have teams of Marxist Leninist people to go inside prisons to indentify these people.

On the subject of identifying political prisoners, we have received letters at Race Today, from senior academics at universities in India, who say that the teams of Marxist Leninists going into prisons are identifying only those prisoners who are sympathetic to their faction. Therefore, those who are not, will remain in prison. Can you comment on this?

No, that is not the correct position. There is no discrimination on the basis of any faction. I can assure you that whatever decisions are being taken, and have been taken, have been uniformly taken in respect of all political prisoners. What is happening is, that people who have recently been released are those who have been engaged in the movement, have been asked to move inside and identify people. It is a very genuine and serious attempt to identify people. I would be very happy to have whatever information your sources have and I would like to act on it. It is not for me to order the release of people, but I can take it up with the people concerned and say that here are these people and they must be released. We need a constant flow of information from those who are involved in these cases.

Nevertheless, MISA still remains on the statute book. Is it the Janata Government's intention to continue preventive detention?

MISA should have been done away with by this time. In fact, that should have been one of our first acts. In the next session, or maybe even before the next session, through a Presidential Ordinance, MISA will be amended and preventive detention, of the kind we have now, will be no more.

Of course, people have raised a lot of questions regarding preventive detention, particularly with regard to anti-social elements, or economic offenders, such as smugglers, hoarders and black marketeers. It should be possible to prosecute them and if it is not, the reason is some compromise somewhere down the line by those who are concerned with the administration of law and order. If the police force is corrupt, if the people who are concerned with the administration of law and order are corrupt, or they compromise with the offenders, that is no reason why there should be a law which denies *any* citizen his freedom and liberty.

My personal view is that preventive detention, as part of the statute must go. My opposition to it is nothing new. I say no preventive detention because it starts with the smugglers and ends up with Jayprakash Narayan.

POPULATION CONTROL

Under the regime of Indira Ghandi, India became the first country in the world to subject its population, by laws, to compulsory sterilisation as a means of controlling births. What is the Janata Government's policy of family planning and, how does it differ, if at all, from those programmes implemented by Congress Party?

Except for the compulsion used at a certain stage during Mrs Ghandi's rule, I don't think there is a difference as far as our policy towards family planning is concerned. Short of compulsion, where vasectomy and other forms of family planning are concerned, we are pursuing the same policy.

I'm afraid I can't give you a very detailed or very informative view of what the Health Minister is currently doing, but what I have been suggesting is a series of economic incentives and disincentives, both of which would come in the shape of one package. For example, an incentive, such as a cash bonus, can be given where marriages are delayed or the first child is delayed. Or, if a man is a factory worker, an incentive may be a special increment, a special promotion and other small benefits.

Is this not the same sort of pressure that was used under the recent Emergency?

It may look in a manner of speaking, as pressure, but I don't look at it as compulsion. I think when one looks at the population problem in India, you need to look at the picture in its entirety. In the circumstances in which we are operating today, there is tremendous pressure about increasing numbers of people, so I would not consider incentives as any form of economic blackmail or undue pressure.



INDIAN WORKERS ABROAD

In your lecture earlier this evening, you identified Indian migrant workers abroad as being the force responsible for generating India's current foreign exchange of four billion US dollars because they send home part of their earnings to their relatives in India. This fact surely places Indian workers in Britain and elsewhere in a central position within the Indian economy. What, however, is the Indian government doing about the struggles which face their workers abroad and the hostile, racist conditions in which they live and work here? Is there any policy?

No, I don't think so. The ministry which is primarily concerned with this is the External Affairs Ministry and, to maybe some extent the Finance Ministry. Frankly, I am not aware of anything that they may-be doing, but I am sure they must be doing something. I'm afraid I can't speak for the government on this because the policy makers are different and we have not had a chance to exchange views or to discuss it at government level.

Speaking for myself, I would like all Indians to go back home and do whatever they can back home. That is where the real action is and that's where all the effort ought to go. The whole health service of Britain is run by Indian doctors and I do not know what compulsions they had to leave the country and come and run Britain's medical services when Indian villages go without medicine. I learned also that there are 4,000 nurses from Kerala in Germany. This is a phenomenon which, incidentally, applies only to European countries, and perhaps America and Canada.

To the extent that there are problems, I am sorry. It is a very complex question and I don't know how one can resolve it. In 1965, I spent 10 days here trying to make a study of Indian immigrants in Britain, but I could not come to any positive conclus-



ions as to what one could do with people who are 6,000 miles away, who face a certain situation because the state and the people of that country have their own reservations about them. This is not to say that the problem is not important, or significant, but you could put it that it is not a priority item on my agenda.

We have been discussing what are known as third world projects with countries, such as the Arab states, which have technical expertise and highly sophisticated technology. What we have been discussing is the use of Arab money, Indian skills and western technology. Implied in the discussion is the fact that you have people that can be deployed to work in various parts of the world today. People go on specific contracts to do a specific job. This is accepted. I don't regard it as any kind of migration.

Are you saying India is going to export labour as a government policy?

I would not call it export of labour. I would think it is more export of skills. It is a different proposition. You see, a man leaving this country and running somebody else's services is one thing. A person, as part of a total economic package, taking on a certain job in some other country, for a specific period but maintaining his links with his country, is another thing. Today, for example, they are putting up power stations in the Arab world, and in Malaysia. We are certainly going to send our skilled people who will put up those power stations. They will earn a lot of money and they will come back to us.

All photographs on Indian Elections Camera Press

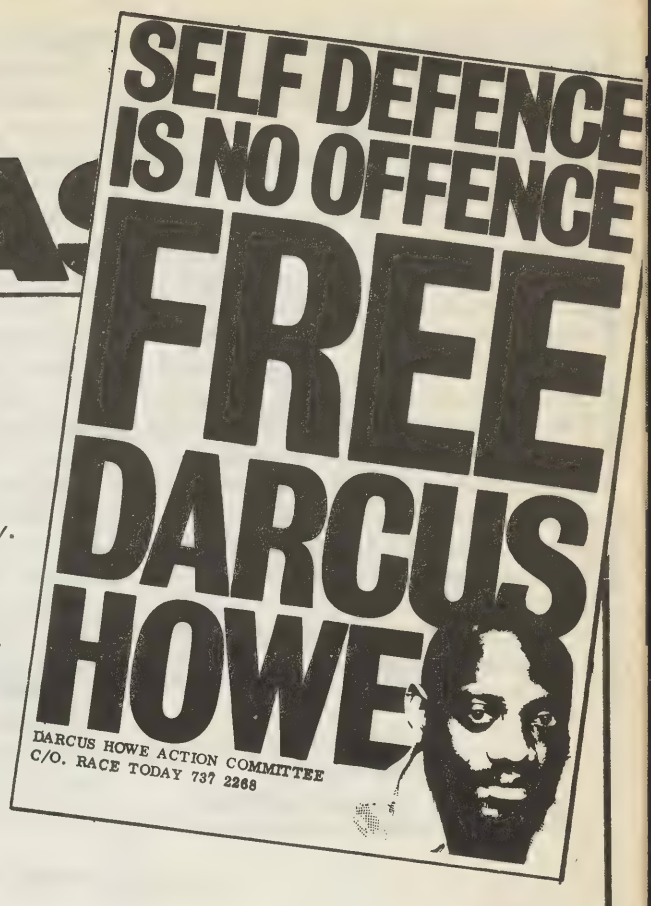
Finally, Mr Fernandes, would you say that from being an ex-trade union leader, and in the leadership of one of the most important strikes of this decade - the Railway Strike of 1974 - your political ideals have become restricted or compromised?

But I was not a trade unionist divorced from political purpose. The struggle has been to overcome the kind of system and the kind of society which has been around. In other words, to create a society where you eliminated the classes, where you gave power to the workers, where you created a whole new system of values and of ownership. This basic conviction and belief has not changed at all.

I think that the restrictions and constraints when one is in power are those of the situation in which you are in. It is not related to power, but to the total situation. And the total situation in India is, that a group of parties have just overcome a fascist dictatorship. Again, the reality is that these parties have produced a document, a plan of action, which has its own limitations. If you ask me what I'm doing today, well, I am operating within the perimeters of the Janata Party manifesto. If there are ideological clashes within the Janata Party, they should not be discouraged, otherwise we will have to go around looking for someone who will tell us what to do. We certainly do not want to find ourselves in that situation all over again. No one is in politics just for the heck of it. People are in politics because they have certain ideals and they will invariably try and push their ideas. This is how we will develop our political machine. The unity we have created is not created from the top. The people of India have created it.

BACKLA

THE IMPRISONMENT OF DARCUS HOWE



Responses to Darcus' arrest and imprisonment continue to arrive at *Race Today*. In this issue, we have selected some examples for publication.

Bradford Black Collective, actively involved in the campaign to free Darcus from prison, devoted an issue of their paper to the campaign and we reprint their editorial. A London solicitor expresses his view that the police, in Darcus' case, acted against their normal methods of procedure; a reply from the Lord Chancellor's office in response to a letter of protest about the case, indicates an unusual degree of interest and sympathy with the case; a complaint sent to all national newspapers, from a member of the Commission For Racial Equality, on the lack of publicity given by Fleet Street newspapers to the jailing of a black editor, which only black community newspapers published, and a letter which gives the view of someone who was present in the public gallery in the court.

The imprisonment of Darcus Howe, editor of *Race Today* and chairman of the Carnival Development Committee, was a serious attack on the black movement in Britain and the international black movement as a whole.

In imprisoning Darcus the British state has shown, once again, that it is prepared to use virtually any means to silence militant blacks. For those of us who came under British colonial rule in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean Darcus' imprisonment was a case of history repeating itself. The empire has gone but the beast which ruled it lingers on and whenever it feels threatened it reacts in the same savage way.

Darcus Howe is one of the black movement's most committed spokesmen and activists. His commitment to the struggles of working class blacks has led to his involvement in serious political activity in both his native Trinidad and in Britain.

Under his editorship *Race Today* has opened its pages to the struggles of working class blacks in Britain and elsewhere, and has become a platform for that section of the black community. A platform which states quite simply that working class blacks must organise themselves to win what they want. In addition to this he has made it his duty to travel to black communities up and down Britain speaking and encouraging blacks to organise themselves and intensify their struggle against the state and other hostile forces. As such he is part of a mass movement in the black community which says that blacks will no longer accept racist abuse assaults and oppression. His defence at Knightsbridge Crown Court was self defence and on the offensive, and, in calling him "an arrogant man" and sentencing him to three months, Judge Clover was not only passing judgement on Darcus' individual case; he was passing judgement on the whole movement, our movement.

The first point which must be made is that Darcus Howe's release owes nothing to 'British justice', whatever that is. His release was won by the power of the international black movement. Faced with this power the state chose to back down rather than face the consequences of open confrontation. The seven day campaign to free Darcus was sufficient to convince the state that they had made what they usually call "a grave error of jusgement". We were only just beginning to flex our muscles when the state gave in. We were tested and we were not found wanting.

The second point is that Darcus' defence was based on self defence *and* on the offensive. The state gave him three months for defending himself against racist abuse and assault. We said "self defence is no offence" and got him out in a week. The political implications of our victory are far reaching in that it affects every black person in this country who defend themselves against racist abuse and assault. Darcus' case and the campaign for his release is an important precedent in the struggle of working class blacks in Britain because racist abuse and assaults are an attack upon our presence here and our struggle to win from this society what we want.

Editorial reprinted from
Bradford Black
September 1977.

Dear Race Today,

Darcus Howe was arrested by the police, taken to a police station and charged with assault occasioning actual bodily harm contrary to Section 47 of the Offence Against the Persons Act 1861. Most people, and probably none of your readers, would find anything surprising in that, any more than I am sure Darcus did. It is just routine, it happens every day of the week.

In fact it does not. I have practised as a Solicitor in London doing criminal work for six years and I have never come across anything like it.

In my experience the Metropolitan police classify assaults into three different types.

The first is a type of assault in which no bodily injury has been caused. That is what is normally known as common assault and which is an offence contrary to Section 42 of Offences Against the Person Act 1861. If the police come across a situation where they think an offence of this kind may have occurred they advise the supposed victim how to take out a private summons in a Magistrates Court and apart from that and taking names and addresses they do not get involved.

The second type is where the assaults has caused some fairly slight bodily injury. That is the offence of assault occasioning actual bodily harm with which Darcus was charged. The police do not consider cases of this kind very serious. They do not think it is their job to deal with minor offences of this kind. Their job is to protect property, catch thieves etc. There-

fore they do little more than they do in relation to the first type of assault – at most in addition to advising how to take out a summons they may offer their assistance in the preparation of the case by making sure witnesses get to court and so forth. However, it would still remain a private prosecution. Never, in my experience, do the police arrest and charge somebody with this offence unless it has been committed against a police officer.

Normally the police make arrests and bring criminal charges only in connection with the third type of assault which is where somebody has been seriously injured and where charges of assault occasioning grevious bodily harm or wounding contrary to Section 20 of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 are brought.

Yet they arrested Darcus, kept him in custody and charged him.

I wonder why?

Yours sincerely,
Ole Hansen,
Clinton Davis & Co.

Dear Race Today,

I read with interest Darcus' own account of his trial in the September/October 1977 issue of *Race Today*, especially since I was at the court for the whole case.

On the final day of the case, on September 7, I was at court with my friends. We all felt confident that if the jury judged the evidence alone, then a not guilty verdict must be the result. In fact, throughout it seemed to us that the position of defendants and appellants should have been reversed – Darcus as the prosecutor of Camp and Conlan.

However, I felt that the article dealt inadequately with Darcus' closing speech. In my view it was the climax of the case and was most certainly what led Judge Clover to direct the jury to find him guilty. The speech confronted the judge, the jury and everyone in the court with the real issue of the case – race, and not the trumped-up charge of ABH. As he said to the jury, they were being asked to pass judgement on a black person who had responded to a racist attack and in this they were at a disadvantage in not having a black person among them who could give them an insight into what it meant to be on the receiving end of such attacks. Race was a question which the modern world has to deal with, and in Britain the activities of Enoch Powell and the National Front meant that nobody could escape it. I supported completely his refusal to apologise for defending himself against Camp and Conlan, especially when he said 'there is an unwritten law that means a lot of us are not going to allow anyone to abuse us without a response'. It was a tremendous fighting speech.

I felt that it was not meant for the confinement of court 5, Knightsbridge Crown Court, because in that dock he was taking a stand, a position for us all in the black community in Britain who face racist hostility and attacks from whites. The fact that it took the all-white jury precisely 15 minutes to find him guilty is an indication not only of what I am saying, but of the present hostile climate in Britain. They took position against a black person's right to defend him or herself.

When Clover sentenced Darcus to three months, my own feelings were identical to the young woman who got up and shouted to him, "you are out of order".

Marcia Johnson

Dear Mrs Howe,

I am writing, on behalf of the Lord Chancellor, to thank you for your letter of September 10, about the case of Darcus Howe.

My enquiries about this case confirm that, following a three day trial at Knightsbridge Crown Court, Mr Howe was convicted on September 7, 1977 of assault occasioning actual bodily harm, for which he was sentenced to three months' imprisonment and ordered to pay £100 towards the costs of the prosecution.

Mr Howe subsequently applied for leave to appeal against his conviction and sentence and the matter was heard by the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) on September 14. The court refused the application as to conviction but granted the application as to sentence and reduced the sentence to that which enabled Mr Howe's immediate release.

I hope you will understand when I say that it is not possible for either the Lord Chancellor or officials of his Department to comment on the verdict reached or propriety of the sentence passed in this or any other individual case. This is because our system of justice is based on the independence of the courts from Government and if comment were made it would be seen as a serious breach of this principle of judicial independence.

Whilst appreciating the reasons which prompted you to write, I am afraid I cannot be of further assistance.

Yours sincerely,
C. J. Hagon,
Lord Chancellor's Office,
London S.W.1.

Dear Race Today,

I am rather disturbed at the amount of publicity given by Fleet Street press to the jailing of Darcus Howe by Knightsbridge Crown Court earlier this month. I cannot recall any efforts made by Fleet Street in calling the public's attention to the circumstances surrounding his jailing, or any efforts in campaigning for his release, in spite of the fact that, a large number of people from the black community in particular were making strenuous efforts to securing his release.

The conclusion one draws from Fleet Street's deafening silence in giving support to a journalist colleague is, that the Editorial policy of *Race Today*, is something they have no time for. Their cries of freedom of the press has a hollow ring to it when challenged in giving support to a black radical/revolutionary periodical magazine. Whilst I do not share many of the points of view expressed in *Race Today*, as a member of the black community in this society I shall defend an editor's right in expressing his point of view. Few can deny that Darcus Howe has brought journalistic distinction to *Race Today*, making it a periodical that has become required reading internationally, to persons deeply concerned with the growth of racism in our present day society. Few would also deny that his jailing may well have been influenced by the radical views he holds, although there exists no evidence that this was indeed the case. The lesson one learns from Fleet Street's attitude regarding Darcus Howe's case is that radical black journalists or editors must be careful not to rely on Fleet Street's influence and good-will if they find themselves in serious trouble with the judges and courts.

It was the Appeal Court's sense of justice and the effective campaign by prominent members of the black community which eventually freed Darcus Howe to the shame of Fleet Street.

Yours sincerely,
Paul Stephenson.

This poem was written on the occasion of Darcus Howe's release from Pentonville prison after serving one week of a three month prison sentence for defending himself against a racial attack.

The abbreviations in the sixth stanza of the poem are: BPM (Black Parents' Movement); BSM (Black Students' Movement); CDC (Carnival Development Committee); RTC (Race Today Collective).

The Bradford Black Collective, active participants in the campaign, should have been included but it would have spoilt the metre form of the poem.

FOR DARCUS HOWE – MAN FREE – A REGGAE POEM

Darcus outta jail
Race Today cannot fail
Darcus outta jail
di people's will mus prevail. .

Dem lack-him-up
inna jail
dem refuse
fi give him bail

But dem cant keep him doun
sed dem cant keep him doun
cau' him a merciles realist
an' him is nat defeatist

Him stan-up in di court
like a mighty lion
him stan-up in di court
like a man of i'on

Darcus outta jail
Race Today cannot fail
Darcus outta jail
di people's will mus prevail. .

an' wen we march pan Pentonville
di BPM were dere
an' wen wi step-it-up to Pentonville
di BSM were dere
an' wen wi dally-up to Pentonville
di CDC were dere
an' wen wi pickit di Pentonville
di RTC were dere
an' soh wi step-it-up di Stran
to make our stan
wi step-it-up di Stran
to di courts of Justice

Darcus outta jail
Race Today cannot fail
Darcus outta jail
di people's will mus prevail.

Dem lack-him-up
fi self defence

dem lack-him-up
fi him confidence

But dem cant keep him doun
sed dem cant keep him doun
cau' him a merciles realist
an him is nat defeatist

Him stan-up in di court
like a mighty lion
him stan-up in di court
like a man of i'on

Darcus outta jail
(whey yu seh?)
Race Today cannot fail
(how you mean!)
Darcus outta jail
(look at dat)
di people's will mus prevail. .

© Linton Kwesi Johnson
September 1977.

THE NEW CARIBBEAN POETS

Echo by Orlando Wong,
Published by Sangsters (Jamaica); should be available from most black bookshops.

At School Today by Accabre Huntley,
Published by Bogle–L'Ouverture Publications,
Price: £1.00 paperback.

A new and powerful voice in Jamaican poetry right now is that of 25 year old Orlando Wong. Imprisoned in 1971, for his part in an armed robbery, Orlando was freed in September, largely as a result of public recognition of his poetic talents. His first volume of poetry *Echo,* belongs to that of a new generation of Jamaican poets, whose poetic sensibilities have been fired by the concrete social realities of urban life in Jamaica, as it is experienced by the unemployed; it also reflects the rising consciousness of sections of the working class and unemployed and, in the case of Orlando, prisoners in Jamaica.

The backdrop of Orlando's poetry is that of political violence, economic crises, food shortages, sub-human housing conditions for the masses, illiteracy, widespread crime and violence, curfews, states of emergency, widespread permanent unemployment, and 'democratic socialism' financed by international capitalism. In the absence of a welfare state, life for the unemployed is lived purely at the level of survival. Here the law of the jungle is easily invoked. As Big Youth would say, '*only the fittest of the fittest survive'.* And so it is that:

de ooman dung de street
13-year-ole son ded
wid a shotgun
inna him han *(Sketches)*

So it is that, *"The sounds of sirens/***CRACK***/the stillness of the night/And another youth drops dead. ." (Unite).* So it is that, *"de washy lookin pickney dem/a play inna place worse dan hag pen"* with, *"de look a hunga inna dem eye",* and, *"every youth. ./ a bawl bout poverty/an police brutality",* and *"ole beapa mad people/. . a roam de street/an de olda head dem/pon side walk a beg/an de. . youth/inna de prison dem" (Bwoy).*

Like the reggae lyricist and the calypsonian – the first popular poets of the Caribbean masses – Orlando writes about his immediate society and his class, in their language, their rhythms, and from their point of view; and he succeeds. He succeeds in creating striking sketches of life in the ghettoes and shanties of West Kingston:

wall slogans
scrawled
in dred
burnt out houses
tell tales
of terrible nights
guns
spitting lead
people sprawled
dead
mirrored in blood –
shot eyes. *(Reflection)*

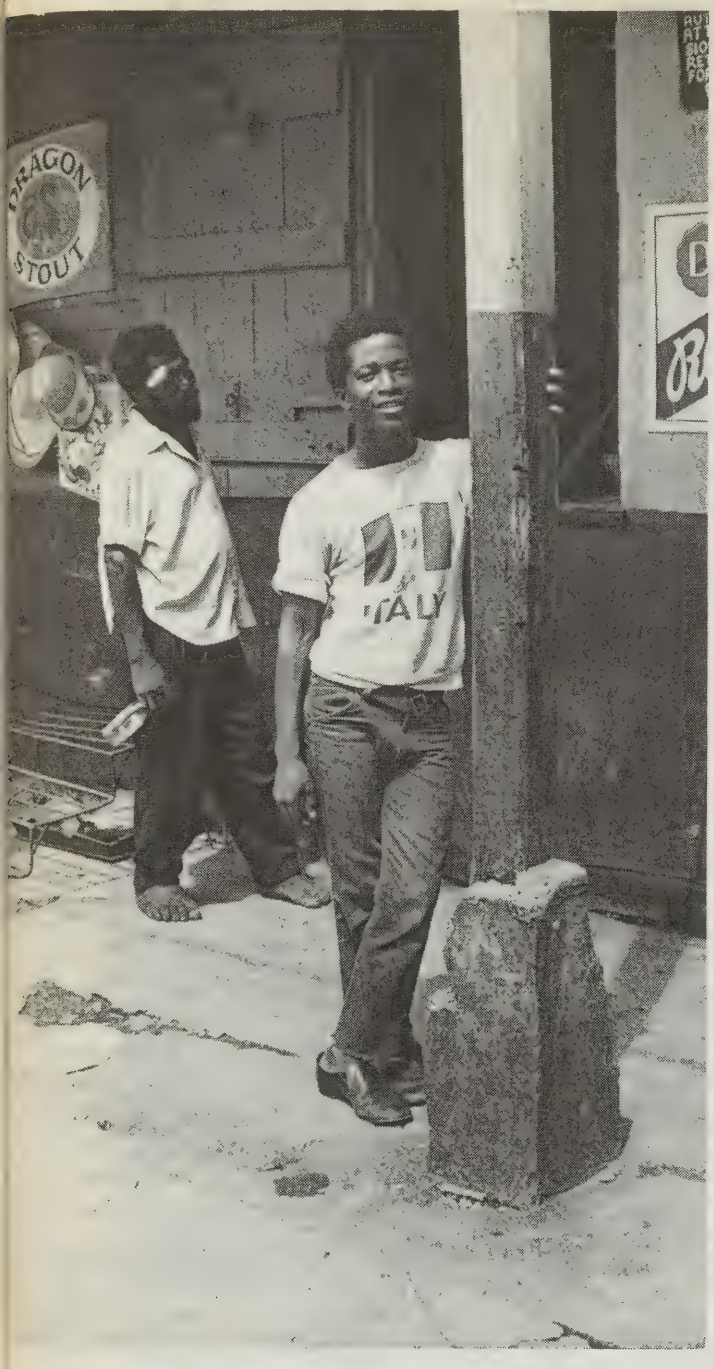
Orlando writes about *"dread times"* when *"earth a blaze"* and *"man a rage",* when *'Pressure Drop':*

eart tun red
curfew
man screw
gun blaze
knife flash
man run hot. . . *(Pressure Drop)*

He writes about the ghetto youth from personal experience:

fi di ghetto youth
it kinda cute
all day I trod earth
a look fi work *(Echo)*

and, in so doing, speaks for many like himself, for whom crime is the only means of survival.



Camera Press: street-side rum bar, Trenchtown



Camera Press: The Sun-Set Lounge



Camera Press: Breakdown in Breastworks, one of Jamaica's 5 parishes

The rising political consciousness that informs and underlies the poems in *Echo* is a combination of black and revolutionary consciousness, as the poems *'Change', 'Beat Yu Drums', 'Decolonisation', 'Yesterday/Today/Tommorrow'* and others reflect. Here we find some thematic and stylistic similarities with the black American soul-poetry of the 60's and early 70's, exemplified by the work of people like Sonia Sanchez and Don L. Lee:

soul
ful
fingersnappin
handclappin
laughin
blackchild *(Change Yes Change)*

or

blak body
mo vin
teasin
rousin pride *(Poem)*

Apart from these stylistic similarities with black American poetry, Orlando works mostly within the Caribbean oral tradition. He often employs the rhythms of street and yard talk; dread talk and the word-music of dub-poetry. Indeed, Orlando's poetry— oral poetry for the most part — has much in common with that of reggae dub-lyricists like Big Youth, Prince Pampadoo, Dillinger, Dr Alimantadoo and others:

it hot
hot hot
man jus a bus shat
it red
red red
dem shot John Tom ded. *(Sketches)*

Orlando's attitude to his art is expressed in the first poem in the book called, *I Want To Write A Poem.* His conscious aim is *"to write/a poem/that'll wake/the senses"*, and *"kindle/a burnin desire in man/to destroy exploitation"*. And yet, it is

Orlando's claim, that he is "no poet" but just "a voice". The irony here is only apparent, for in order to achieve the aim set out in *'I Want To Write A Poem'*, Orlando can only be "a voice" that "echo the *people's/thought/laughter/cry/sigh*" (*No Poet*). The immediacy of his themes, his use of popular language, his crafts and skill of words and rhythm, all these elements assures Orlando some degree of success.

At School Today, by **Accabre Huntley,** reflects both continuity and change in the Caribbean experience in Britain. It also reflects the beginning of a new creative response to the black experience in Britain from a new generation of young blacks, born in Britain of first generation immigrant workers from the Caribbean. Accabre's poetry speaks for a generation of British born blacks who are confident about who they are and what they are about:

I am black as I thought
my lids are brown as
I thought
My hair is curled as I
thought
I am free as I know.

Accabre Huntley, a new and promising young poet, is a 10 year old black girl, born in Britain, of Guyanese parents. Accabre has been writing poetry since she was three years old and most of the poems which make up *At School Today,* her first collection, were written before, and up to her eighth birthday.

The fact that Accabre's parents are Jessica and Eric Huntley, proprietors of Bogle—L'Ouverture booksellers and publishers, who are also actively involved in the struggles of the black communities in Britain, is significant for her art in three respects. In the first place, it means that Accabre is being exposed to various forms of literature, especially Caribbean poetry, which she likes a great deal. In the second place, it means that Accabre is growing up in a kind of literary environment where she comes into contact with other Caribbean poets, taking part in poetry readings in London, New York and the Caribbean, delighting audiences wherever she reads. Thirdly, having parents like Jessica and Eric means that Accabre is given the freedom and the encouragement to develop her creative abilities, at the same time making available to her their own Guyanese and Caribbean heritage.

She writes about her immediate world of family, friends, school, her own private world of impressions, doubts, fears and joys, as well as expressing her own point of view on subjects like Guyanese politics and the Foreman/Ali fight. As we turn the pages of her book, we are taken through moments, moods and impressions which are as varied as the carefree glee of *Sing To Me,* the poignancy of *Bedtime,* the profundity of the reflective *All Alone,* or the pathos of the title poem, *At School Today:*

At school today
My teacher hit me hard
She shook me till I was dead in my heart
Black Mother, save me from my troubles
And take me into your arms.

There is no contrivance in Accabre's poetry but there are influences which may be as varied as the poetry and poets with whom she has come into contact. Her voice, however, is a personal and individual one. She writes with great honesty and an abundance of genuine feeling. An interesting aspect of Accabre's poetry — which is of some relevance to the ongoing debate about the validity of respecting the linguistic heritage of black and Asian children in British schools — is the fact that Accabre writes confidently both in West Indian creole as well as in standard English, as a comparison between four lines from the poem, *Blackman Brotherman,* and five lines from *To Mother On Mother's Day* illustrates:

Dem lads dos be walking up dem streets
With hats with red on white stripes,
on dem head
Some people say dem really dread. . .

Thank you mummy, for all you do
The washing, the cooking, the housework too,
You do the shopping and make the beds.
Thank you for paying my dinner money,
And looking after Chauncey, Karl, Daddy and
me.

Although Accabre Huntley is no ordinary child, in the sense that she is very bright and talented and is in a situation that is conducive to the development of her creative abilities, *At School Today* should be an inspiration to parents, teachers and children, for it is a measure of the creative response available from young blacks, given the right kind of opportunities, encouragement and atmosphere in which to do so.



REVIEW NOTES

Writing In Cuba Since The Revolution edited by Andrew Salkey. Published by Bogle—L'Ouverture Publications. Price: £1.95 paperback, £4.95 hardback.
Poems Of Succession by Martin Carter
Published by New Beacon Books.
Price: £1.95 paperback, £4.00 hardback

Writing In Cuba Since The Revolution is an anthology of poetry, short stories and essays edited and introduced by Andrew Salkey, one of the greatest promoters of Caribbean literature, outside the Caribbean. The writing here belongs to a long established tradition of Latin American, revolutionary writing, 'imbued with social and political realities'. What Andrew has done here is to bring together in a single volume a whole range of responses to the Cuban revolution, from some of Cuba's finest artists and intellectuals. Thus, the thematic link of the book is the Cuban revolution itself and the commitment of the writers represented in this volume.

The poetic responses vary, from the powerfully combative and defiant *Land In The Sierra And Below* by Nicolas Guillen, to tributes to Che Guevara, to Felix Rodriguez's remarkable military poem, *Rifle 5767,* which tells the story of Felix Faustino Ferran/and his national militiamans rifle, to Domingo Alfonso's *Poem* where the poet, in his own words, is simply describing the things felt by an ordinary man.

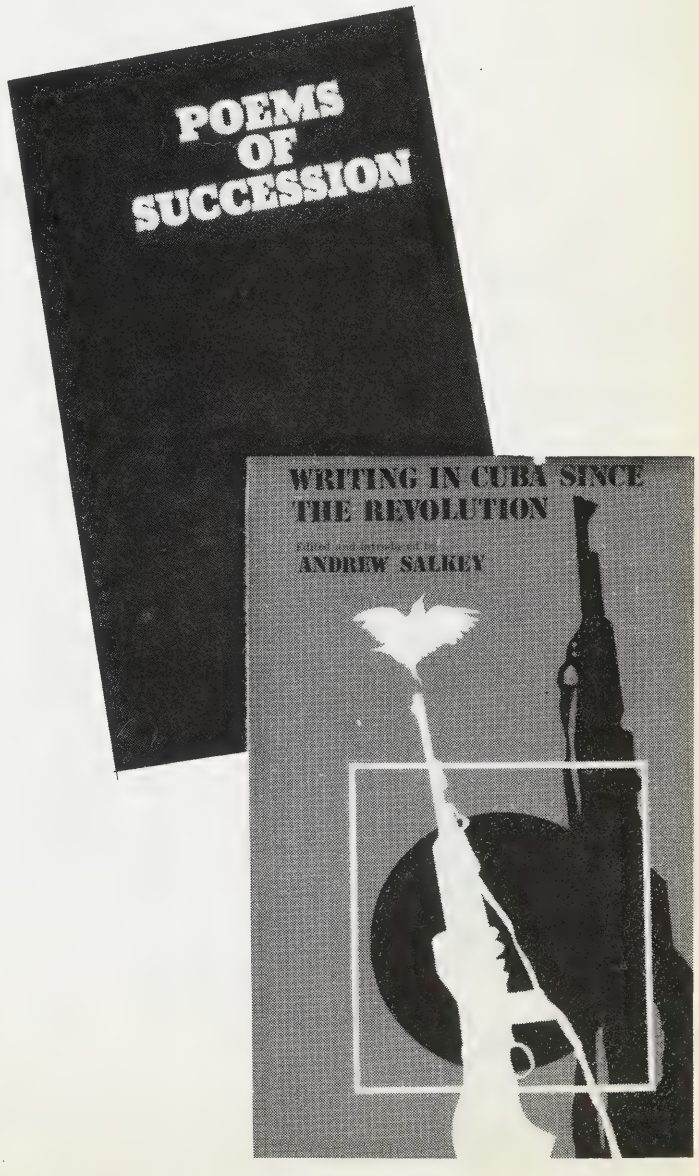
Of the five short stories, Felix Pita Rodriguez's *The Seed,* set in a prison cell in Vietnam during the period of struggle against French Colonialism is, perhaps, the most symbolic. Another interesting story is Victor Agostina's *Pepe* which takes the form of an incredible monologue by a small-time scuffler/lackey in Havana, watching the revolution on television. The creative responses to the revolution are complemented by writings and extracts of speeches from Che Guevara and Fidel Castro as well as essays on the power of the media as a 'secret weapon' and the intellectual in the revolution.

Martin Carter's *Poems Of Succession* represents the finest poetic response to historical change in the English speaking Caribbean. The poems represented in this powerful volume — the most complete collection of the poetry of Carter to be published so far— were born out of, and reflect, Carter's own involvement in the struggle of the Guyanese people for national sovereignty and the thwarted efforts to forge a socialist path.

It is the work of a man in "the strange combustion" of his days, with "the tension of the world inside" him. The poems are the result of a hard synthesis of private anguish and public events/issues which reflect some of the ways in which historical forces impinge on private sensibility. Indeed, the strength of Carter's poetry lies in the fact that he writes from a position of personal involvement in his country's struggle. He was imprisoned in 1953 for his political activities and was later a Minister in Burnham's government for a while. Some of the most powerful poems in the book (spread over the period 1951 to 1975) were written during the era he was imprisoned: poems like *I Clench My Fist, I Come From The Nigger Yard, This Is A Dark Time My Love, Death Of A Comrade* and others. The defiant, resolute mood of the earlier poems are counterpointed by the more philosophical, brooding, sceptical tone of later poems like *A Mouth Is Always Muzzled, All To Endure, In The When Time* and others.

These two new publications are valuable contributions to Caribbean and world literature.

Linton Kwesi Johnson — Race Today Collective



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Apply in writing to Saltley Action Centre, 2 Alum Rock Road, Birmingham 8. Telephone 021-328 2307.

Closing date December 1, 1977.

Race Today, 74 Shakespeare Road, London SE24 OPT. Tel: 01-737 2268